DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 469 784 CE 079 772

AUTHOR	Nielsen, Soren P.
TITLE	Final Evaluation of RO9405 Phare VET Reform Programme, Ministry of National Education, Bucharest, Romania. Final Version.
INSTITUTION	European Training Foundation, Turin (Italy).
PUB DATE	1999-00-00
NOTE	98p.; Not all appendixes are included with document.
AVAILABLE FROM	For full text: http://www.etf.it/etfweb.nsf/pages/downloadsee.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative (142)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Change Strategies; Curriculum Development; Demonstration Programs; *Educational Change; Educational Equipment; *Educational Improvement; Educational Policy; Foreign Countries; *International Educational Exchange; Job Training; Management Development; Partnerships in Education; Pilot Projects; Postsecondary Education; Program Effectiveness; Program Evaluation; Secondary Education; Staff Development; Sustainable Development; Teacher Education; *Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS	*European Union; Impact Studies; *Romania; Social Partners (European Community)

ABSTRACT

The Phare Vocational Education and Training (VET) Reform Programme in Romania was evaluated in May-June 1999. According to the two evaluators who conducted intensive visits to 14 pilot and demonstration schools and met with 9 zonal and local development committees and key representatives of Romanian government and educational agencies, the VET reform program successfully accomplished its immediate objectives of introducing new types of curricula designed to increase VET graduates' initiative, flexibility, and background and thereby help them adapt to the country's changed job profiles and labor demands. The evaluation found that although program actors and management initially encountered a number of barriers, they became increasingly more professional and efficient as the program progressed. The program's results and inputs to Romania's national policy debate and general VET reform appeared quite sustainable to the evaluators in terms of policy and strategies, institutional development, introduction of social partnership, and generalization of the new curriculum model to the entire country. The following materials are among the document's attachments and 12 appendixes: list of individuals met during the evaluation missions; list of pilot and demonstration schools; program terms of reference; and various Romanian government notifications and decisions regarding the development, implementation, and evaluation of VET. (Contains 46 references.) (MN)

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Final Evaluation of RO9405
Phare VET Reform Programme
Ministry of National Education
Bucharest, Romania

Final version

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List of Abbreviations:

COSA	=	Council for Occupational Standards and Assessment
ETF	=	European Training Foundation
FP	=	Financing Proposal
ICT	=	Information and Communication Technologies
MoLSP	=	Ministry of Labour and Social Protection
MoNE	=	Ministry of National Education
NCDVET	=	National Centre for Development of VET
VET	=	Vocational Education and Training
VTS	=	Vocational Training Standard

I. INTRODUCTION

The final evaluation of the Phare VET Reform Programme in Romania[1] took place in May and June 1999. A first mission took place from 9th to 20th May, during which the two evaluators had an intensive visit programme including 14 pilot and demonstration schools, meetings with 9 zonal and local development committees, and a series of meetings with key representatives of the Ministries of National Education and of Labour and Social Protection, the National Centre for Development of VET, the National Agency for Employment and Training, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the trade unions, the National VET Council, the Institute for Educational Sciences and the National Observatory.

A follow-up mission was conducted in the period 14th to 18th June, including discussions with further representatives of the Ministry of National Education and the European Training Foundation. In addition to the above discussions the evaluators have had access to all documentation produced in connection with the planning, implementation and evaluation of the Phare programme and documentation related to the educational reform in Romania in general.

The evaluators would like to express their thanks to the organisers who facilitated the numerous visits and meetings, to the management, staff and students of the 14 schools visited for their kind reception and hospitality and to all the representatives of the social partners and of the national institutions and bodies who generously gave of their time to answer all questions. We give our apologies to the 61 schools that were not visited due to the time constraints. A special thanks to the translators and the driver who worked very hard during the missions. And last but not least we would like to thank also B&B Comp. for their professional support in producing this report.

[1] The Terms of Reference are attached as Annex 1.

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

II.1 General findings

1. The Phare VET Reform programme in Romania must be characterised as a success in relation to its four immediate objectives: it has introduced new types of curricula which present a major step in the direction of adjusting the nature of Romanian VET to increase initiative, flexibility and broaden the background of graduates in order to respond to the changed job profiles required by transformations in labour demand. The new model has also developed student choice and delays specialisation until the 2nd and especially the 3rd year of training. (See also specific components).

2. The programme implementation and management encountered a number of barriers at the start but became increasingly more professional and efficient during the life-time of the programme. This accelerated pace is evident from the results, which were more than impressive in the 3rd year of the implementation. The PMU managed to create a consensus and disseminate a common understanding of the many central issues involved in the reform, through a carefully planned approach which stressed the production of clear concepts and terms of references for all work undertaken at national and local level. All activities were accompanied by a high degree of commitment and growing enthusiasm.

3. The results and inputs of the Phare VET Reform programme to the national VET policy debate and general VET reform seem to be quite sustainable at this stage, in terms of policy and strategies, institutional development, introduction of social partnership and in concrete implementation terms ~ generalisation of the new curriculum model to the whole country. It needs to be said that the policy development occurred at a very late stage and that it happened only thanks to the efforts of the Romanian key agents, who had worked hard on the elaboration of concepts and approaches in spite of the lack of an appropriate EU input in this area.

II.2 Curriculum development

1. The Phare programme has made a remarkable and impressive contribution to the modernisation and decentralisation of Romanian VET curriculum development in terms of formulation and dissemination of curriculum policy, teaching and learning philosophy and methodology, but also in terms of sheer volume produced within the programme. A common understanding of the new VET philosophy and methodology seems to be shared between all participants, whether from national, regional or local level.

2. The resulting VET model with the tree-like structure with increasing specialisation based on modules has provided Romania with a system which basically allows for more flexible juncture of new trades, vertical and occupational mobility. The curricula will need continued in-depth work on the qualitative issues during the years to come (standardisation versus flexibility/individuality, interdisciplinarity, accommodation of the new teaching and learning concepts). In connection with the Phare programme a new approach to vocational teaching and learning has been introduced in the participating schools which is based on the concept of "revitalising Romanian VET with a cultural approach" – as contrary to the mechanistic approach taken in the Ceausescu era.

3. The impact and sustainability of the new Phare curricula was secured by the decision to generalise the model to all VET schools from the school year 1999-2000. The question of how to find the right balance between qualification needs and the offer of VET programmes is – quite understandably – not solved yet, but increasingly initiatives are being taken at national, regional and local levels to shift the balance, which is still in favour of the structure of the former economy, towards the growth sectors.

II.3 Teacher training

1. The Phare programme has offered wide opportunities for teacher and manager training. More than 3000 participants have participated in train-the-trainers or "cascading" dissemination events both abroad and in all parts of Romania. The programme has provided training in the innovative principles and techniques guiding the reform in e.g. subject area and curriculum development, classroom management training, evaluation and assessment and leadership and many other issues. The training was efficient and has created a consensus around many basic issues.

2. The dissemination exercise needed for the generalisation of the curricula is overwhelming. In view of the scarce funds available for this, only the good will, collegiality and hard work of local Phare teachers with their colleagues in the wider school network makes it possible at this time to disseminate the main principles and philosophy of the new curricula on a basic level. In spite of the impressive number of participants the training effort, which will be needed in the next few years, is enormous and will need a more coordinated effort at national level. At the present the dissemination varies from county to county and is too much dependent on the local competencies and will.

3. Management training was focused on the new role of VET schools in a competitive market economy, on the new relations with the local and social partners and on the need to democratise school management internally. The volume offered was limited due to the fact, that the WB project provides a stronger input on management training. However, in spite of this the evaluation clearly showed that the school managers have taken up the new challenge and that the training was helpful in this. The EU partnerships were especially efficient in illustrating the new role to the managers.

4. The FP objective of reforming pre-service teacher training was not reached, and this is understandable since this was a far too ambitious goal at this stage. But the Phare programme was instrumental in introducing new concepts of teaching and learning and of decentral training experiences and capacities. In the next phase the systematic development of VET teacher training programmes will be increasingly important and to some extent decisive for the sustainability of the model introduced by the Phare VET reform programme.

II.4 Up-dating of Equipment

1. The Phare programme gave a substantial number of VET schools the chance to make a tiger jump in relation to vocational training equipment which put them years ahead of other schools and which made them advanced from other points of view: the schools became very interesting for the local social partners as centers of excellence and maybe future regional training centres. These schools are interesting as continuing training centers not only for local social partners but also for vocational teacher training. Last but not least those schools which are able to produce something demanded by the market (e.g. food) are able to become partly self-sustained through the selling of their surplus production. In the current very difficult economic situation this perspective is important, as it is a necessary precondition for the schools´ ability to sustain active development.

2. The evaluation showed that the equipment provided to a large extent met the demands of the schools. The equipment was procured and delivered in accordance with Phare rules and regulations and is functioning well. It is being used intensively - in 2 or 3 shifts a day. In spite of late delivery in relation to the curriculum implementation the evaluation got the impression that the teachers are making an effort to use the equipment in line with the new teaching and learning principles.

3. The decision to generalise the Phare curricula to the whole country has prompted the need to formulate a policy and guidelines for the equipment aspect of the generalisation. This has resulted in the formulation of minimum standards for equipment needed to sustain the individual curricula. The minimum standards are a prerequisite and support for the decentralisation of the budget for equipment from national to county level, which has taken place. The decentralisation is accompanied by a new procedure and guidelines for the local coordination of the utilisation of equipment, a measure which is clearly linked with the very tight financial situation.

II.5 EU Partnerships

1. The programme provided the pilot schools with opportunities to visit similar VET institutions in 5 different EU member states and vice versa, as an integrated means of reaching the overall programme objectives. The visits were quite successful, providing the Romanian managers and teachers with experiences of how VET is run in full-fledged democratic and market economies. In spite of the fact, that the partnership programme was already finished in late spring 1997, the impact of the partnership experience was felt throughout the programme. The PMU was instrumental in this by encouraging the schools´ continued initiatives in the remainder of the programme, not financially but conceptually and morally.

2. The approach taken facilitated the entry of the Phare schools into the universe of EU funded transnational partnership programmes like Leonardo and Socrates. Quite a few of the Phare schools - even among the demonstration schools who did not go abroad - have managed to continue their partnership links or strike up new ones based either on exchanges or on Internet contacts.

II.6 Social Partnership

1. The Phare VET programme was instrumental in establishing the basis of social partnership by initiating a multipartite consultative structure at national, regional and local levels. In July 1997 this structure was adopted as a permanent national structure. The progress made especially during the last year of the programme is very positive and impressive, especially in view of the extremely difficult economic situation in the country. The progress can be attributed to several factors: appointment of 6 zonal coordinators, directly linked with the programme management, who actively supported the development of the work in the committees, a firming up of the description of the tasks and responsibilities of the committees, and the provision of targeted training to the social partners in their new role. The institutional framework of the social partnership was strengthened even more in the latest amendment to the Law on Education, adopted by Parliament in 1999.

2. The Phare programme also contributed very actively to the redefinition of the role of the VET institutions from being a passive implementing agent for the MoNE into being an active, flexible and responsive regional and local VET provider in a dialogue with the local community. The programme provided training opportunities for school management both abroad and at home in these issues.

III. Description of the programme

III.1 Background to the Romanian situation

Romania had its first law on vocational education and training (VET) already in 1898, and in the years preceding the take over of government power by the Ceaucescu regime, the VET system had developed into a system which could compare itself to some of the more developed European countries in terms of structure and contents. However, when socialism was introduced in the country, this tradition was broken and Romania´s VET system became increasingly industrially oriented, training for narrow specialisations needed in the state owned companies. The lack of a competitive labour market added to the problems by e.g. directing workers, which were not really needed from a productivity point of view, to state companies.

The Revolution in 1989 had a deep impact on the educational system, but in particular on the vocational education and training, which emerged as "the Cinderella of the educational system", due to its intimate links with the centrally planned economy and company structure, which were thrown into an acute crisis by the events.

The VET system, which emerged from the Ceausescu era, was characterised as follows by the present Minister of Education, Andrei Marga:

"Our education system needs a real reform because at this point in time it bears the traces of Eighteenth Century romanticism, of Nineteenth Century positivism, of eastern European socialism, and of the unorganised efforts of changing it after 1989"[2].

The characteristics were more specifically:

1. Management of the VET system was highly centralised, in decision-making, in respect of innovation and in allocation of resources, both human and material resources:
2. The infrastructure was inappropriate for a market economy
3. The equipment and material basis was highly inadequate
4. Teaching methods were classical and school management had insufficient management skills
5. There were few opportunities for continuing education and
6. The assessment methods used were traditional and not flexible.

According to the report "*Vocational Education and Training Reform Programme – Policy Aspects and Strategy*" (1997) the main objective of the VET reform in Romania is the accomplishment of a vocational training at the level of the countries in the European Community, following the demands of a democratic society, a market economy, in compliance with the labour market revolution in Romania and with a view to facilitating the economic restructuring.

III.2 Objectives of the RO9405 Phare VET Reform Programme

The Financing Proposal of the Phare VET Programme, which was signed in March 1995, attached 25 MECU to a 3-year programme (from March 1995 to 31st December 1997). The wider objective was to support the Government of Romania in its policy reforms of the VET system, in particular secondary VET, to improve relevance to the developing market economy and to assist economic restructuring.

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[2] Andrei Marga: Guidelines for the Reform of Education in Romania,1999

Four immediate objectives within the reform of secondary VET were to:
(a) adjust the nature of VET to increase initiative, flexibility and broaden the background of graduates in order to respond to the changed profile of labour demand.
(b) seek development of social partnership with employers in defining and implementing VET
(c) seek efficiency of provision and
(d) develop student choice and delay specialisation.

The Financing Proposal was very specific on activities which were to take place within 4 main elements:
(i) National level actions and policy framework
(ii) Pilot school activities
(iii) Demonstration school activities
(iv) Programme management and implementation activities

(i) National Level Actions and Policy Framework, having as main activities:
(a) undertake training of MoE, Inspectorate and CCD staff
(b) develop international links for pilot and demonstration schools with EU VET institutions
(c) determine new curriculum principles and policy for initial teacher training.
(d) monitor and evaluate the educational soundness of programmes in the pilot schools
(e) assist in evaluation of options and development of policy including a Strategic Review of VET
(f) disseminate results nationally and internationally.

(ii) Pilot school activities
(a) redesign initial training content, basing new and generalised curricula upon
- (a) a preliminary selection of 20 occupational groups,
- (b) essential or key skills, and
- (c) introduction to the world of work.

(b) write new teaching and learning materials for modern, flexible, student centred learning, developed integrally with curricula.
(c) modernise teaching and learning methods, by in-service teacher and instructor training.
(d) develop community and school based assessment and certification
(e) develop specifications for essential and affordable modernisation of school equipment

(iii) Demonstration school activities
The demonstration schools were to receive:
(a) the new curricula, each year, on a grade by grade basis, as developed in the pilot schools
(b) training in modern teaching, assessment and school management methods and
(c) resources for a procurement package of curriculum related equipment and materials
(d) active dissemination

(iv) Programme management and implementation activities
(a) ensure timely and effective implementation
(b) give direct support to the pilot schools, demonstration schools, the 5 VET development committees and the local education inspectorates in critical topics and
(c) assist locally contracted institutions.

Links with other donor programmes
Already before the start of the Phare programme the close link with the World Bank loan financed education project (50 mio $) was emphasised, however, the different paces of the implementation of the Phare programme and the relevant components of the WB project and a general lack of coordination made it difficult to ensure collaboration and coordination.

IV Analysis and assessment of the implementation of programme components

IV.1 Evaluation of the curriculum development approach

IV.1.1 Overview

Until recently, the VET system in Romania provided education and training for 192[3] narrowly defined occupations determined by a) central planning of all inputs into the system and b) mass production in large state owned enterprises by which the VET schools were partly supported.

Due to the backwardness of technologies in the enterprises themselves and a low investment rate in general, the range of skills taught at schools was limited and rarely modified. The curriculum, duration of instruction and didactic methodology were prescribed in a top down approach and there was only little room for alteration or innovation.

The curriculum component of the Phare VET Reform largely follows the pattern in the other eight Phare countries, in that its curriculum development rationale emphasises:

- initial skills provision
- a learner/student outcome based approach to pedagogy
- the reduction of specialist areas
- an integrated and vocational preparation approach to the first years
- the introduction of core or key skills
- a shift from an input to an output philosophy of evaluation
- a closer relationship between education and enterprise.

Curricular reform is accompanied by a package including management training for school leaders; teacher training; equipment procurement; attempted work experience; a modular approach to the curriculum with subsequent management and assessment implications as well as those for the integration between initial and continuing training.

The curriculum reform programme has been developed at national level, in 25 pilot schools and 50 demonstration schools. Curricula have been developed based on 20 occupational families covering in principle all occupations in the country.

The new concepts introduced by the Phare VET programme are among others:

- The elaboration of occupational standards as starting points (documents) to identify specific competencies of vocational qualifications;
- The elaboration of vocational training standards as the point of departure for curriculum development;
- Introduction of new subjects or curriculum areas which allow training in high technologies and offer a European dimension to the training;
- Development of key skills which increase the graduates´ mobility and flexibility on the labour market and create the foundation for continuing vocational training;
- Competency based assessment and certification taking into account the training vocational standards.

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[3] The number of occupations was reduced to 134 as a result of the VET reform.

The curriculum development project has been based on a centrally designed strategy and has been tightly co-ordinated by the PMU. Schools selected on the basis of competition together with social partners have been given individual contracts to develop the curricular products. The formulation of curricular documents has implied an immense workload for the central and local levels and the achievements are highly impressive.[4]

Findings:

In the 14 VET schools visited and the evaluation meetings we held with 9 zonal and local development committees we only met people who were enthusiastic about their participation in the curriculum development project. There is everywhere something in the air – a feeling of "a requiring job well done" (the school director of the National School of Gas in Medias). This curriculum development effort has been the important first step of decentralisation in Romanian VET. School based curriculum and teaching package development is a totally new and substantial experience in the country.

IV.1.2 The VET curriculum – model and achievements

The VET curriculum has been devised in a modular curricular system which is a fundamentally new model for Romania. The curriculum is here defined in the narrow sense as the formal curriculum: the totality of the school documents of the regulatory type in which the essential data regarding the educational process and the learning experiences offered to the student are formulated.

Curricula have been developed for two levels:
- Vocational school level: skilled worker qualification (EU level 2 equivalent)
- Post high school level: technician qualification (EU level 3 equivalent)

The vocational training standards represent the conveying of the occupational standards into educational offers. They define, in terms of standardisation, the objectives and goals of the training, the graduates´ necessary knowledge and skills for various trades and specialisations, and recommended forms of final examination.

The organisation of the training standards is based on a number of principles:
1. Modularization
2. School flexibility in training
3. The modernisation of the evaluation system.

"In school" flexibility assumes that vocational training standards for the vocational school are conceived to ensure a broad training in the first year, narrower and deeper in the second year, with strict specialisations, in most cases, in the third year and eventually the fourth. The second and third year modules are interchangeable.

The modular structure increases the adaptability and mobility of the system. In order to comply with the overall reform measures in the secondary educational system, the curricular structure develops a unit of nucleus curriculum covering 70% of national educational contents and curricular units of local application covering the rest of 30% of the contents.

For the formal curriculum, the elements on which the written curriculum is based (the educational plan and the curricula), the content of the vocational training standards has been structured into three training categories based on the principle of broad entrance and late specialisation:

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[4] See also pp. 15-16

A. The "general culture training" component (basic training (first year) for a large group of trades, possibly from more than one occupational family, which shares common technical competencies);
B. The "basic, general training for trade groups" component (training for a large group of trades (second year) possibly from more occupational families, which ensures common technical competencies for all these trades);
C. The "vocational training in a trade or specialisation" component (modular organised speciality training (third year and sometimes the second year too) which ensures the training of specific competencies in a certain trade). A fourth year of training in some trades is offered to ensure a deeper specialisation or to bridge the gap in trades where employment is not allowed before the age of 18.

To support the implementation of new curricula a number of methodological and didactical "teaching packages" has been developed as well. The curriculum authorship has been backed up by a methodological authorship producing methodical guides, didactic units of media usage, training portfolios and the practical training project. Methodological guides and portfolios have been issued in order to implement the VET school curricula to be used by teachers as inspirational study and preparation material. Notebooks containing working sheets for student use during the class study have been drawn up to accomplish theoretical and practical issues. Work projects on different issues to be used by foremen in the practical training have been drawn up to support the instruction in the workshop, laboratory or the training taking place in the companies.

The volume of materials elaborated during the project is highly impressive:

1. *Training standards (first variant and revised) – 134*
2. *Curricula for technical subjects (first variant and revised)*
   Vocational school
   First year - 15
   Second year - 72
   Third year - 134
   Fourth year - 30

   Post high school
   First year - 65
   Second year - 65
   Third year - 2
3. *Didactical units for technical subjects - 60*
4. *Didactical portfolios for technical subjects*
   Vocational school
   First year - 60
   Second year - portfolios: 240
   - work projects: 72
   Third year - 134

   Post high school
   First year - 455
5. *Curricula for general subjects – vocational school (first variant and revised)*
   First year - 13
   Second year - 7
   Third year - 2
6. *Didactical portfolios for general subjects - 22*

Findings:

1. *The enormous production of curricular products is quite frankly impressive. The PMU assisted by the external curriculum experts have managed to define and carry out a curriculum development strategy which has implied hard work all through the three years. The sophistication and clarity of the documentation issued by the PMU staff is remarkable. Equally remarkable is the commitment and depth of understanding of the issues formulated in many curriculum policy and strategy documents as well as demonstrated by the former PMU staff, other experts and school managers and teachers from the pilot schools who were involved in the decentralised curriculum process which was a totally new collective learning experience for the actors in the country. In all the 14 pilot (and demonstration) schools visited a noticeable pride was clearly visible due to this achievement, and in many schools the products were shown to us.*

2. *Each action planned in the programme has been governed by a contract between the PMU and the school. In the mid-term evaluation by AFPA it was found that "the preparation, the negotiation, the processing and the monitoring of a great number of contracts – more than 325 – is time consuming for the PMU financial section as well as for the PMU manager." This is of course correct and it would have been more efficient to prepare global contracts including all the planned activities of each school at the beginning of the programme. On the other hand, we found that the many elaborated terms of references are meaningful and have given clear directions to the participating schools. A genuine culture of "grass root" innovation and development work based on sending project applications to centrally funded development programmes has tendentially been established within the VET sector.[5] This is a very important step in preparation for the added importance of finding extra-budgetary means for school financing.*

IV.1.3 The socio-economic context

Redefining the curriculum in VET imposes two conditions: on the one hand, the redefinition of trades and professions on the labour market, on the other hand, a whole educational context approach. One of the serious problems in Romania has been the fact that no job re-classification had taken place at the outset of the programme. For the elaboration of the training contents of the 134 "qualifications" offered by the VET system, 20 occupational families covering the occupations of the various sectors of the Romanian economy have been used. This point of departure was given at the outset. The choice of 20 so-called occupational families was originally defined in *the Financing Memorandum* for the Phare VET Programme. From the 20 occupational families making up the reform programme, 19 are active at its end:

1. Mechanics and materials technology
2. Electrotechnics and energetics
3. Electronics, automatics, industrial information technology
4. Extraction and processing of minerals
5. Extraction and processing of natural gas and crude oil
6. Industrial chemistry
7. Construction and public work;
8. Agriculture
9. Food industry

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[5] For instance, the Post and Telecommunication School in Bucharest (a pilot school) signed 32 individual contracts with the PMU under the Phare programme. "We had to prepare project applications and luckily we won the contracts which were attractive to us, and all products were delivered in time. This was a quite new and very important experience to our school! We are prepared to continue with this kind of contractual work in the future."

10. Wood products manufacture
11. Light industry
12. Transport
13. Audio-video and communication techniques
14. Forestry and environment protection
15. Commerce and business services
16. Tourism and public catering services
17. Finances, administration, management
18. Services and allied arts
19. Health and social welfare

In the *"Study on labour market and related implications on the manpower provision by the VET system in Romania"* (1998) it is noted that this classification is not only a very poor system of classifying occupations but they, furthermore, do not correspond to the classification adopted by the National Commission of Statistics, thus adding complications to comparisons.

Curriculum development has been based on local market research studies and investigations of students´ aspirations. The project´s zonal co-ordinators have had the responsibility to establish relations with the social partners and thus to share relevant data about trends and tendencies in the employment system.

For occupational profiles, there are two types of occupational standardisation, coming from other projects financed by the World Bank and the Romanian Government:

- The *occupational standards* elaborated by COSA (the Council for Occupational Standards and Assessment);
- The *occupational profiles* elaborated by the Project on Career Counselling.

Based upon these two approaches, in principle, the PMU assisted with the development of training standards which lead to curriculum development for vocational schools. Neither approach would seem to be sufficient nor are they compatible. It should be noted that the Phare project at the start had no occupational standards to build on; the team had to launch its own study on labour market needs in the 6 zones. Today, COSA has developed approx. 100 occupational standards. This led to a reformulation and revision of the VTS. It is planned that a total of 300 occupational standards will be developed before the end of the year 2000

The evaluation report made by AFPA International in early summer 1997 confirms the difficulty of undertaking a comprehensive educational reform in an as yet untransformed economy. The evaluation points out that:

- The Phare VET Programme is still more oriented towards offer than demand. It creates motivation and expectation among schools staff and students and allows students to benefit from a wider knowledge base and to make a more informed choice of professional career;
- It is not certain, however, that the introduction of new professional specializations, introduced during the 3rd. or 4th. years will be sufficient to adapt the structure of labour qualifications to the needs of the Romanian economy;
- Additionally, the adoption of the list of occupations at the start of the programme may not entirely reflect the needs of the present and future labour market.

The difficulty is that the institutions and instruments to fulfil the fine-tuning function of adapting the VET courses being offered with the labour market trends are not yet present in the Romanian institutional framework.

In the 1998 *Study on labour market...*(mentioned above) it is observed that the choice of the 134 qualifications on the basis of the undertaken labour analysis and of a field study of the Brasov region[6] reveals a number of weaknesses:

- There is no homogeneity both in the typology and level of specialisation between the qualifications contained in the list;
- Too little attention has been paid to occupations extremely relevant from the employment point of view like those of the agro-business sector;
- Too little attention has been paid also to occupations that will certainly develop in the future, especially those in the administrative and commercial sector;
- Too little attention is paid, in practice, to the development of entrepreneurial capacities.

We would question the relevance of the last point concerning the entrepreneurial capacities, since the Phare VET programme specifically introduced entrepreneurial training elements in the 2nd and as a subject in the 3rd school year.

The labour market relevance of the qualifications/trades offered by the reformed programmes still has to be tested: the first cohort of skilled workers will leave the VET schools this summer.

Findings:

1. *Based on a survey of VET school leavers in 1998, the most successful specialities were the following: Public catering, textile, ready-to-wear, auto services; the low employment specialities were: mechanics, mining, chemistry and agriculture. In a number of the schools visited we found that the programmes on offer still try to cater for traditional industries and big state-owned enterprises of which they were formerly partner schools. It was openly recognised in some schools (e.g. the mechanical school "1. Mai" in Ploiesti) that only 20% of school leavers might be expected to find a relevant job upon graduation. A rethinking of the job profiles seems to be absolutely necessary, also as a consequence of the actual economic crises and of the accelerated privatisation measures in the pipeline.*

2. *The scope of the programme: 20 occupational families and 75 schools (25 pilot schools and 50 demonstration schools), where the selection of schools in fact was decided by the MoE before the programme started, has been too large. (However, it is important to note that these basic conditions were outlined in the Financing Proposal!). As the AFPA report also points out, too many occupational families were selected and too much emphasis was put on the traditional occupational categories. As in other Phare countries, the programme being a pilot project should have concentrated more on developing the educational answers to the emerging job profiles in the future economic growth sectors.*

3. *After the programme ended the Minister of Education decided that the new curricula must be implemented in all VET schools and covering all VET programmes from the 1999 school year. So the idea to have as many as 75 schools onboard turned out to be an advantage. But the basic problem of how to identify the right balance between qualification needs and VET programmes offered is still not solved. Another more general aspect to be carefully considered is the lack of a general coordination, at the highest government level, between educational and training policies on one side and between development policies, active and passive labour policies on the other.*

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[6] The 1998 labour market study was limited to only one region and it cannot be generalised. It only partially reflected the Romanian reality and there was no consensus on the findings.

IV.1.4 Designing and structuring the curriculum

The Phare VET programme has operated on the basis of vocational training standards (VTS) formulated by pilot schoolteachers in company with the social partners. The actual decisions were taken by teachers together with the social partners and assisted by the PMU. Training standards have been defined as core competencies of the students related to their professional development in each vocational field. The standards are obligatory at national level but not defined by legislation. The curricula in initial training are approved by a ministerial order, so approved curricula are regarded as legal documents.

For continuing education a law is needed. In order to harmonise between the two it is not only required that all curricula be issued by a ministerial order but also that they are harmonised on a national level. This should be done by an interministerial body for transparency and recognition. A law is only needed for regulated professions. Any educational supplier in Romania can apply to be recognised as a provider of continuing education - they should obtain both local and national recognition.

The curriculum principles were changed during the project. The Romanian VTS structure (Phare VET) initially adopted a mixed formula based on partly the (Dutch) modular model and partly the (German) occupational model. The biggest mistake made in the 1st version was that the curricula were described separately concerning the general culture elements, meaning that they were still treated as traditional subjects. In the 2nd, revised version the goal was to describe discreet units of integrated capacities. This was obtained e.g. in the integrated subjects of "social sciences" and "natural sciences" of each competency unit, taken from the occupational standard. But due to the changes, visible differences are still found in the curricular products.

The first design strategy may be seen from the 1st. year curricula (c.f. the existing "hotel worker" curriculum), where the VTS was *subject oriented* with content details and capacities based on learning units. These curricula were very detailed and contained five dimensions:

1) objectives and motivation,
2) content/themes,
3) methods and procedures,
4) didactic supplies, and
5) evaluation criteria.

It should be noted that this too detailed design approach was carried out deliberately. The Phare programme implied radical changes (but at the beginning the changes were not very radical, it was a step by step development) and worked with teachers who had only very recent experience in modern curriculum principles. A critical factor was the fact that the teaching units were exceedingly centred on the contents of the traditional subjects, without a real coverage of the training levels they had been elaborated for. In short, curricula were too input oriented.

All in all 3 revisions took place, one after each school year - with a modification concerning the 3rd year: the first revision took place after 1st year, and the 2nd after 2nd year. The 2nd revision looked at the basic and general contents and gave an input to the 3rd year development. During the 3rd year (1998-99), a brief 3rd revision took place alongside the actual delivery of the pilot curricula, as part of the training process, as observation and "in-the-process"-changes. It is clear that the 3rd revision was a very brief one which needs to be deepened much more.

In general, the revisions had the effect of:

1) making the curricula more output oriented and
2) more integrated

Also the modular approach changed the structure of the curricula.

After the first revision, which already showed that the approach was not flexible enough, a more flexible approach was introduced, as a result of the accumulated experience from practice, and on the availability of (some of) the COSA occupational standards. This necessity of a more flexible approach was also confirmed by the AFPA mid-term evaluation. The structure and taxonomy of the vocational competencies were rethought from the perspective of evaluation and examination of the training levels. The competencies are described in terms of final requirements to be examined through content tests. Curricula are here output oriented. In the present form the VTS describe the fundamental competencies which are essential for gaining the vocational qualification. These competencies are actualised through education and training and are expressed in 3 categories of integrated capacities (theoretical and practical):

1) of knowledge,
2) of skills/practice, and
3) of personal and social competencies.

The capacities described in the VTS are the subject of the final evaluation and examination. The curricula have a more simple structure with only three dimensions: a) contents/themes, b) methodology, activity and form/method, and c) performance criteria (cf. "hotel worker", 2nd. year).

With the new Training Standards based on competencies the Phare project also set up a new system of evaluation: competence based and organised on the basis of co-operation between VET school teachers and the relevant social partners. Added to the existing diploma was a certificate testifying the competency level. It is an intermediate step towards the introduction of a transferable credit system. The examination and certification methodology was issued by the Ministry of National Education at the proposal of the PMU as a consequence of the conclusions of the contracts awarded to the Institute of Educational Sciences (Ro) and the European Institute of Education and Social Policy. The NCDVET will carry out this responsibility together with the MoNE until the COSA will be institutionalised. After this happens, it will be decided.

The evaluation of students is performed in as real situations as possible by testing the abilities with specific work tasks; the beneficiaries of the trained labour force are part of the evaluation. The content of the specialised training is evaluated on the basis of standardised competencies whose performance indicators are formulated in the curriculum (*performance criteria*).

The written curricula represent the fleshing out and conversion of the VTS into training documents (educational plan, curricula and syllabi). The new curricula were developed on the basis of modern principles:

- Assurance of a basic training as wide as possible within the vocational school (cf. the students start in VET as early as at the age of 14-15 after only eight years of compulsory school)
- Modularization
- Continuing adaptation to the educational needs
- Organisation of the educational process based on objectives
- The education process is focused on the student
- Interdisciplinarity
- Modernisation of the evaluation system
- Assurance of extrafunctional abilities to prepare for lifelong learning.

General education provides a functional background to vocational content, thus: languages, both foreign and mother, deal with communication skills; science and computer classes are applied; entrepreneurship is included in the curriculum; there are cross-curricular themes, optional modules and projects which allow integration of general education into specialised vocational content; a new obligatory subject introduced is vocational guidance and counselling.

To give a more concrete description of the system, let us take a closer look at one example: the occupational family of "Food industry" with the pilot school "Dumitru Motoc" in Bucharest and two demonstration schools, the Food Industry High School in Sibiu and the Food Industry High School "Elena Doamna" in Galati. The example is presented here because the evaluation team visited all three schools.

The curricula of the first study year of the VET school has been drawn up on the basis of basic training fields related to several occupational fields and not directly a profession. This allows the 14-15 years old student to postpone his or her choice of occupation for 1-2 years. The students have the possibility to choose a general training (for a group of professions) after the first study year and a profession from the group after the second study year. In the "Food industry" field, the following subjects shall be studied: raw materials, microbiology of the alimentary products, and process technology of alimentary production. These subjects provide a broad basis for understanding the alimentary product processing. Also observance of hygiene and labour protection regulations form part of the first year curriculum. The third year has a modular structure in order to be more flexible. Within all the professions of the occupational family the vocational training begins in the second study year, which, consequently, is also drawn up in a modularised structure. There is a gradual transition from basic training to technical training.

New subjects have been introduced in the first year: foreign language, information technology; in the second year: civic behaviour; and in the third year of study: entrepreneurial education. Both in the VET school and in the Post High School programmes "Orientation/Information and Vocational Consulting" has been introduced.

All parties agree that the purpose of VET programmes in Romania is not only to produce a competent worker but also a good citizen; consequently a student will be given 13 hours/ week of general subjects in the first year and 8 hours/week in the second school year.

The educational plan is as follows:
First study year - 32 hours/week
Second study year - 32 hours/week
Third study year - 33 hours/week
Fourth study year - 33 hours/week

The weight of the various subjects in the "Food industry" sector[7] is seen in the table below:

Study year	Basic knowledge	Specialised training	Practical training
First	13	7	12
Second	8	12	12
Third	3	28+2*	35**
Fourth	-	12	21

* For the third year, the weekly practical training is included in the basic curriculum modules; two additional hours are dedicated to optional training (for upgrading and occupational mobility).
** Practical training for the final work project.

Training standards, curriculum development and trainers training have been organised by mixed teams of vocational teachers and social partners. The total process has involved the ministries, the PMU, the social partners, the chambers of commerce and industry, regional authorities, directors of schools and teachers. The concrete curriculum development process took place in mixed groups between the 75 schools (at the end there was no difference between them due to the long delay of 9 months before the

[7] The weight of the various subjects is identical all the occupational families.

project got off the ground).

Findings:

1. *A number of new occupations and specialisations have been covered by new curricula although the occupational profiles still reflect the former structure based on heavy industry. There has been a clear move towards de-specialisation of occupational profiles, a broadening of skills requirements and a strengthening of the general education contents. The new curricula promote broad training during the first two years, leaving occupation specific skills for the third year. However, those curricula have only been applied in 75 schools supported by Phare, while in the remaining schools the old curricula and teaching methods are still applied.*

2. *There is an interesting and very important internal tension within the Romanian curriculum development strategy. There is a difference between curricula which are aimed at producing skills and knowledge and others which are recognising the ability to solve problems. Problem solving needs an integrated environment of work and learning. Changing work organisation, increased use of information technology and environmental protection are essential aspects of requirements for the ability to act under conditions of uncertainty. This curriculum orientation places emphasis on the role of the individual as the main protagonist in society who takes charge of his/her own future in uncertain environments. The word "curriculum" here stresses the importance of an individual's preparation for the future. Against this complex and individual related view of curriculum the term "standard" accentuates the requirements of the society. Standards accomplish specific functions in the curricular reform process, e.g. verification, quality assurance, transparency and comparability. The standardisation issues seem to have been quite dominating in the Phare programme and still are – but the ambitions behind a number of concrete measures clearly point in the direction of opening up more flexible pathways of learning for young people. This ambiguity is a fertile ground for the next phase in Romania.*

3. *It was often mentioned by representatives from the county Inspectorate during the evaluation meetings with the zonal and regional development committees that the new curricula are clearly too crowded and too much based on listing up elements of contents. The balance between learning goals and the time set aside for learning is not yet optimal considering the learning abilities of the young students. This problem is also accentuated by the many general subjects allocated only 1 lesson per week in the educational plan. Some revision of the total curriculum is advisable. The revision approach should be first and foremost global instead of being based on the individual subject or module. Interdisciplinarity could be expanded so that also the general subjects are taught in integrated, more "holistic" blocks with an emphasis on the occupationally relevant aspects.* [8]

4. *The 3rd. year specialised training introduces two types of optionals: 1) the occupational mobility, which allows the student to expand into neighbouring trades to meet the local needs and 2) the vertical mobility which has the objective of deepening the specialisation, and which is pushed by technological development. The specialised training is developed as modules with the aim of increasing the continuous adaptability and mobility of the system by allowing an easy change of contents according to the labour market needs. Such a structure offers the initial VET schools a good chance to become providers of further training and retraining courses easily adaptable to the demands of the employers. The pilot and demonstration schools now have new technology, new teaching methods and a well-trained teacher staff. They should capitalise on this resource base and would be in a definitely strong position in the CVT market. The schools are furthermore able to offer publicly recognised certification. Another great opportunity to be tapped is the fact that new qualification requirements are always first articulated by the companies in the CVT field as a*

[8] It should be noted that some steps have already been taken – in that there are interdisciplinary subjects like social sciences and natural sciences as well as applied information technology and entrepreneurship.

request to have courses to allow employees to tackle new technology, new materials, new work organisation forms, etc. To engage in training partnerships with companies in need of continuing training would open up to more precise signals about promising new job profiles. The curriculum renewal process would hereby get a stronger foundation than hitherto.

5. *In the former Ceausescu regime the VET had become extremely technically specialised - it is characteristic of the reform in today´s VET schools in Romania that now the schools definitely want to take - as contrary to the Ceausescu approach - a more cultural approach, they talk about "revitalising VET with a cultural approach" - and not to focus so much on the purely technical training.*

IV.1.5 The delivery of curriculum: teaching and learning

Teachers have been an integral part of curriculum development with responsibility for designing teaching strategies, pedagogic methods, the organisation of learning, and the development of learning materials. There is an attempt to switch from instruction-led to experience-led VET, and many VET teachers have retained links to work experience.

The curriculum model chosen was not just imported from abroad. Romania studied the systems of different countries – Germany, the UK, F, I and NL. The model implemented was a mixture of these foreign blueprints and does have a high degree of flexibility. The Romanian team understood "the curriculum development process" the way the Germans (GTZ) did. Before 1989 the Romanian VET system was to some extent comparable to the German dual system. VET was financed by the enterprises; only approx. 10% of costs was state financed. School directors and teachers still have good relations with companies and the Phare project has built on that special relationship.

The Phare curriculum reform strategy involves many new elements and challenges to the VET teachers and foremen. Not all teachers were trained in the pilot and demonstration schools – in fact, too few were trained to manage the new curricular framework. All curriculum developers were trained and all teachers for Phare classes, of which there was 1-2-3 in each school, were trained. It was never the intention to train all - the dissemination should take place as a cascade over time. Quite a number of schools even asked to be allowed to introduce the curricula at their schools because they liked the new approach. In relation to the vocational schools the number of such schools was 47 and for the post high schools all in all 51 additional schools introduced the Phare curricula in the school year 1998-99. The local Phare schools provided some support to these schools in their efforts. Within the Phare schools some extended the Phare curriculum to more classes during the lifetime of the programme. It means that by the summer of 1999 a total of 173 schools were already working actively with Phare curricula.

Teachers and foremen must have pedagogical training to manage the new system. Modifications of the curricula have meant new subjects: e.g. foreign language teaching, applied sciences, and educational and vocational counselling. Teachers, who normally teach one subject only, have had to adapt to new contents and new teaching styles. The new methods implemented in the pilot VET classes have functioned exceptionally well according to many teachers. The produced teaching materials – developed guides and teachers´ portfolios, student sheets and overhead slides – are an important support basis for the teachers. All the pilot VET programmes now contain general subjects, much preferred by the Romanian teachers who prefer to take a cultural approach - as opposed to Ceausescu times. Curricula have become simpler and were reformulated so that they are all related to the occupational family. Teachers of general subjects report that subjects are more functional than before, "application" is the catchword. For instance "Romanian" is now a general subject having mainly communicative purposes. Also the English teachers have had to transform their teaching from being mostly literature-based to communication exercises.

The crucial and also nicest experience for the involved developers was to work on the teaching

packages, because the process of making the teaching packages, with methodological guidelines and concrete examples of delivery, uncovered weaker points in the curricula. To describe the implementation process forced the developers to reflect on the problematic points and was thus very helpful for both the design and the assessment aspects.

Teachers of the different subject categories have collaborated within subject groups organised at the county level by the Inspectorate. The partner school visits were also decisively helpful. The pilot schoolteachers got well acquainted with the potentials of using new pedagogical methods by visiting partner schools in other EU countries.

Also the teaching of modules is a new experience for Romanian VET schoolteachers. A lot of didactical materials have been developed, although not in the form of specific manuals due to time pressures. This is an important outcome of the Phare programme. The modules are accompanied by training material packages which are used everyday in the school classes. Under Phare it was possible to give teachers salaries for preparing this material but this has now stopped. Schools are expected to copy this material out of their own resources. The teachers interviewed liked the didactic material, the use of which is not obligatory but which functions as guidelines. The teachers designed it themselves. The teaching packages are being described as adjustable to reality and at least in principle form a flexible framework. It is clearly felt that the detailed guidelines were necessary in the first phase of the reform and that the material will be indispensable in the dissemination of the new teaching contents and methods to the 90% of Romanian VET teachers not involved in the Phare programme.

Most teachers say that from the students´ perspective, today´s teaching functions much better. What really counts is the level of student motivation. It is reportedly much easier to be a teacher when applying student activating methods. The start was difficult and not least the general subject teachers have had a number of difficulties in "translating" their academic subjects.

Also the Inspectorate, which is responsible for education at the county level but generally not too familiar with VET, has expressed its acceptance of the balance between vocational and general subjects in the new programmes. Before there was a clear clash between the specialities and the general subjects. This is said to be much better now with the requirement of functionality.

It is really not surprising that the process of changing teaching styles is slow even in the Phare VET programme; for instance the new equipment took a long time to arrive in the schools. Nevertheless, the curriculum aims at a level of competency for students where they can perform autonomously in the work place. Workshop practice for students (also here teaching packages were made for projects) is oriented towards project work and product achievement which aims at encouraging the experience of students in technical skills, creativity and teamwork. One example is making furniture as a micro-production activity. Another example is in tourism where at the Calimanesti school students' practice during the summer holiday in the Black Sea resorts. This kind of practice is guided by tutors so that a reflective learning situation is established. But this form of practical learning organised in a didactically planned school-company interlinkage is still not very outspread in the country. Although project assignments are obligatory in the 3rd year - and this kind of linkage is already included in the general training of the 2nd year on a basic level - the problem is that it remains difficult to find project partners in the enterprises because of the economic situation.

Findings:

1. *Most of the observations of teaching at the 14 VET schools visited demonstrated a very efficient use of the new equipment as an integral part of the new curriculum. Many schools use the equipment in two, even three shifts. In general, there is a very positive, indeed warm atmosphere between teachers and students. The traditional "cultural contract" between the teacher and his/her class is still very much alive in Romania. Often we found many green plants and flowers*

even in the metal workshops! We did not observe many longer teaching sequences in general and technical subjects. But the impression was that teaching is still characterised by teacher centredness and is relatively traditional. While so much work has been invested in preparing curricula ("what to teach") and new didactical materials ("how to teach"), the next step should focus on teacher and foremen training. Much still needs to be done in this area. There is a risk that the time-consuming and voluminous text production becomes a ritualised target in itself and is not seen as a means to support more quality and relevance in the learning process by helping to reshape the focus and skills of the teachers.

2. *It is our impression that the first class students in VET schools, 14-15 years old, are simply too young and immature for the requirements of vocational education and training. They get too little out of using the costly equipment and they also force teachers to spend much time on general subjects which would be more appropriately taught in compulsory school. The Romanian government has plans to expand compulsory school to 9 years. This should take place as soon as possible to allow the vocational schools to concentrate on VET related subjects.*

3. *In a situation where the former close interplay between VET schools and companies is more or less broken down, a reshaping of the role and function of the foremen, the practical workshop instructors, ought to have a high priority. Due to the fact that so much of the practical training must be undertaken as school-based activities, the foremen constitute an important role model as a bridge to the world of labour. Their contribution in the delivery of the curriculum should be underpinned by a concentrated effort to upqualify this group, undoubtedly the most central transmitters of the all important work-based learning in VET programmes. Their intuitive understanding of work process knowledge should be strengthened by a greater emphasis on theoretical and methodical in-service courses.*

IV.2 Assessment of the training component: training programmes for school managers, curriculum development officers and teachers and trainers

IV.2.1 Overview

The development of human resources has been a priority of the vocational education and training programme. The Phare programme has introduced a series of innovations of curricula and has correlated these with a change in the school managerial function: the democratisation of school management styles and a customer focused educational process. Courses of trainers´ training for the teaching staff and for the school and inspectorates´ managers have been provided, and the development of the training strategy has been carried out based on the principle of multiplication or "cascading".

Teacher training has been restructured as trainers´ training, in order to provide the pilot school network with the basic knowledge of the new methodologies, and has contained the following components:

- Subject area and curriculum training
- Classroom management training
- Evaluation and assessment training
- Leadership training

Management training has been focused on the aspects of educational changes and human resource development components:

- Interpersonal communication and team building
- Planning and evaluation

- Motivation and training.

The Phare reform strategy has been an important and innovative experience. The importance of the Phare programme is linked with the fact that through this programme the schools experienced for the first time that they could cope with the tasks at local level. The actors perceive the decentralisation of the process of programme development (from ministry to schools) and their own role in this process as a breakthrough for the schools and teachers. For many of them, this has been a new professional experience in which communication with Romanian specialists, contact with foreign experts and access to scientific documentation have been essential.

In Romania, teachers from vocational schools possess good speciality knowledge, but they have weaker methodological and pedagogical skills, in most cases achieved by their own experimentation. The reform is a complex process requiring support in the fields of conception reconsiderations, revisions and restructuring of knowledge and of pedagogical skills and capacities.

IV.2.2 The training component: volume, course contents and methodologies

The training component has had a very large scale. In 1995-96 the first round took place with a focus on curriculum development methodology. The first activity was a three day course on "Training Standards and Curriculum Development" for 50 carefully selected teachers of technical subjects.

The teacher training took place in three phases:

I.	July to August 1996	Training in Ireland of developers
II.	September 1996 to July 1997	Training of teacher trainers in Romania
III.	August 1997 to October 1998	Multiplication of training in Romania

The curriculum developers´ training activity consisted of 7 courses, each lasting 14 days, in 1996 in Ireland organised by FAS International for 150 school directors and teachers of technical subjects.

The next activity was a 3 day course on "Curriculum Development and Instructional Methods" for 180 technical subject teachers.

The start up phase trained in all 380 curriculum developers. In particular the training taking place in Ireland for the core group was an important step. This was an expensive mode of qualifying teachers and directors. The programme was not fine-tuned and synchronised with the actual phases of the curriculum development process in the Romanian context so modifications turned out to be necessary. But the Romanian team learned a lot and developed a network culture which they drew on during the rest of the project cycle.

In 1996 a new phase started with courses on "School Management through School Partnership". This was organised as an introductory course for 25 pilot school directors followed by a 2-week visit to EU partner schools embracing a total of 42 directors and 108 teachers; the EU partner schools paid a 7 days visit to the Romanian schools 3 months later. It is remarkable that the partner school component was not to a higher extent integrated with the curriculum development process. It was used as an inspiration and a possibility to see how new pedagogical methods were put into practical use in Western Europe and how modern VET school management principles function.

In 1997 three types of training activities took place. 468 teachers were trained in teacher and trainer training principles and methodologies. This programme was organised early to set up a team of "transmitters" to teach other teachers in the cascading programme. A number of 5-day methodological-didactical courses for 300 subject teachers were arranged. Five school management courses were carried out for pilot and demonstration school directors as well as for general school inspectors (county

level) and school inspectors for technical subjects, a total of 159 participants took part. In these school management courses a new principle was introduced: 5 days courses, homework and 3 days follow-up courses.

In 1998 a large-scale training programme involving 1755 participants (class tutors, subject teachers, vocational guidance teachers, and social partners) took place.

The content of the training programme embraced the following themes:
1. Standards and curriculum development
2. Active teaching methods
3. Integration of general culture and technical subject areas
4. Teaching portfolios (teacher guides and student-centred learning)
5. Computer assisted teaching, incl. Internet and usage of related media
6. Classroom management - team building and small group leadership
7. Integration of technologies and workshop practice curricula
8. Vocational guidance and counselling (curriculum and classroom applications)
9. Modular training (classroom applications)
10. Evaluation and assessment (methods and classroom applications)
11. Entrepreneurship education (curriculum development and classroom application)
12. Civics and applied social sciences (classroom applications)
13. Applied sciences – chemistry, biology, physics, mathematics (classroom applications)
14. Class tutors´ training.

Workshop instructors were included in themes 7, 8, 9 and 14.

The courses were based on an interactive, experienced-based type of training. Much emphasis was placed on the teacher as a professional. Another important approach was to set the curriculum focus on the practical side of training and organising the work in combined teams of general culture and technical subject teachers. Also the integration of the social partners and the Inspectorate in the training for the curriculum development process was an important and highly valued element in the programme. Efforts were taken to stimulate the establishing of school/teacher networks to sustain the reform programme; many of these teacher networks are still active.

Findings:

1. *Although the training component has been a large-scale operation, there have been some imbalances in the programme. First and foremost there is still a vast training effort to be undertaken with teachers from pilot and demonstration schools. Another critical factor is the very little involvement of the foremen, the workshop instructors, compared to the technical subject teachers´ training. It was also mentioned in some of the demonstration schools visited that there had been an unbalanced participation of the pilot schoolteachers and demonstration schoolteachers.*

2. *The "cascading" multiplication process is still slow in many zonal regions and in many counties. According to the evaluation meeting held with inspectors from all 41 "judets" (or counties) in Romania, there has been an unevenly spread dissemination of the TT results at the school and county level. This poses a hindrance to the broader implementation of the Phare methodology. But it was also clear that, in general, there might have been too little attention paid by the School County Inspectorate; in some zonal regions, e.g. the one in Brasov, a considerable activity has been undertaken in a close collaboration between the zonal Phare coordinator and the Inspectorate and with good results. Network learning and experience sharing between the county level Inspectorate offices across the country do not really appear to have taken place even though the inspectors took part in some of the training seminars. Also the Inspectorate should undertake organisational changes and streamline its approach in accordance with the new VET practices.*

3. *Teachers appreciate the new, democratic and efficient style of preparing and initiating the reform: the experimental verification of the VET programme before it becomes general. The decentralised approach of curriculum development and teaching packages construction by moving the centre of where they are elaborated from the Ministry of National Education into the schools is very much liked. There is everywhere a general and favourable attitude of support to and engagement in the Phare reform programme. The teacher training programme has had a platform function and has constituted a democratic forum where debates were organised and exchanges of experience took place between schools, the PMU and methodological experts.*

IV.2.3 Competencies developed by participants in courses

In an evaluation report, "Evaluation of the Phare VET Reform Programme" (March 1997) the authors found, based on a questionnaire analysis, that the training undertaken had been efficacious and efficient. A positive impact of the training in the school practice was already obvious. The training costs, although not minor, are justified by the immediately controllable effects and they were supposed to be assured further on also. This conclusion is shared by our own observations and interviews.

The learning outcome of the training efforts has not been quite optimal. The fact that the 2-weeks' course on curriculum development in Ireland was placed after the first year curricula had already been produced led to a number of modifications in the training programme delivered by FAS International. Hardly any training needs assessments were made before the courses started which made it difficult for course providers to define the right level. For instance, the Economic School in Constanta, a pilot school, told us that they only went to Ireland after having finished their curriculum design work for the first school year.

The school director of Calimanesti found that the training of teachers was maybe the most important part of the programme. The results had been so good that the school now wanted to expand the didactical methods into high school teaching also and into continuing training for workers.

Also the management training courses were defined as helpful and have resulted in visible changes in the schools. Some schools are today so successful in the market that they risk to pay taxes.

The school director of the Gas School in Medias underlined that curriculum is one thing – the application is something quite different which depends on the competence of the individual teacher. "Teaching is Hamlet-like: you ask the same questions again and again!" The new methodologies and guidelines are still on a trial basis. For the individual teacher it is daily search and adaptation. But the students are very eager to participate in active teaching.

The manager and teacher training were tendered on the basis of specific TORs, in which the methodology was laid down. So all manager and teacher training was done on contractual basis. Among the deliverers of training were: the universities, the social partners, the Chamber of Commerce and their National Business School, the employment offices, experienced teachers from schools, counsellors for vocational guidance from municipalities.

The development work was contracted to the staff of both pilot and demonstration schools within the relevant field, and groups were formed that were in charge of development, revision and training. This created a positive atmosphere of competition between the schools but was also instrumental in creating a professional network between schools within the same field. A positive element was the fact that the directors of the schools are also teachers and could therefore contribute positively to the functioning of the teams.

During 1998 training was very intense, events took place every month for professional groups. As a result of the training and of the Phare VET reform programme in general, the teachers felt that they

were professionally more flexible, open and innovative. They organised all training based on active learning methods by using simulations, role plays, negotiation exercises, group work and problem oriented project organised work. All courses were based on a 2 session sequence: the first session was a training round followed by a project work assignment at home and finally a follow-up session lasting three days. This two-step strategy gave very good results. It gave room for an initial articulation of aggression and resistance to change etc., but this was always followed by a much more open atmosphere.

The main reason for success should be found with the excellent Romanian core teacher training team consisting of a handful of VET experts, who not only provided a major input to the management and teacher training programme but also contributed very strongly to the building up of long-lasting networks. Of this team the majority consisted of people with a long practical VET experience. Another factor conducive to success was the active contribution of the social partners. In general, those interviewed appear to be very satisfied with the results of the courses. The mentality was changed among teachers and school managers. The participating teachers all wanted more – in depth and breadth. And there is a great willingness among teachers to function as teacher trainers in the future. Several trainers of teachers trained in the Phare programme have been contracted to the WB programme, and they have been included into the national network of teacher trainers of the MoNE.

One impediment to an optimal implementation and institutionalisation of the Phare VET Reform programme achievements should not be forgotten: there has been quite a lot of exchange on the school management level since the training took place.

Findings:

1. *The training of teachers and managers component has been relatively successful in Romania. Problems have occurred related to the timing of the training but new attitudes and new approaches have clearly been created. A major problem still not solved is that these relevant training courses have been confined predominantly to participants from the pilot schools. To secure a broader implementation of the new curricula a massive training effort will have to be undertaken. One-day information meetings will not be enough. Courses should last for at least one week to have the necessary effect. Money has not been allocated for this effort. The Inspectorates are in charge of the county level training. So either the Inspectorate must find money for the remuneration of the training or the schools must do the training out of good will. These training programmes are the responsibility of the county Inspectorate after the Phare programme has now ended. The challenge must be faced if the new approach is to be sustained.*

2. *There is a need to have a new round of training of school managers. What is needed is a stronger ability to draw up strategic plans and business plans for the VET schools. In the harsh economic situation in Romania schools will have to rely partly on self-financing mechanisms. This training for all VET school directors should be organised in the zonal regions and already trained school managers should be asked to be trainers. The WB programme component for management training is partly focusing on these aspects.*

IV.2.4 Sustainability and impact of the component

A National Council of Teacher Training was established in 1997. Its president is Mrs Lucia Gliga, MoNE, Directorate for Personnel, School Network and Management, which is responsible at central level for all teacher training in pre-university educational institutions. The area of pre-service teacher training in Romania is treated as one coherent area for all pre-university training institutions. The Phare programme was a major step ahead in the teacher training and very valuable experience, even if it did not provide a new concept for initial VET teacher training. It is for the WB project to support the development of pre-service teacher training.

Much still needs to be done in this field. A systematic effort will have to be done in vocational teacher and foreman training in Romania. It might be even more important in the next round than work on the specific curriculum development activities.

IV.3 Updating of Equipment

IV.3.1 Overview

The RO9405 Programme attached 18 MECU (or 72% of the total budget) for the procurement of equipment to the 25 pilot and 50 demonstration schools. This is a very substantial amount, making the equipment component the largest of its kind in any of the Phare VET programmes that have been implemented in the Phare countries.

For this reason the evaluation devoted special attention to this component, in order to evaluate not only how the equipment component was implemented, but also what the Phare programme has meant for the formulation of national equipment policy in the area of VET.

IV.3.2 Policy Context

The Financing Proposal (FP) did not specify the need to integrate into or coordinate the procurement undertaken under the Phare programme with a national policy in the area. This would have been natural, taking into consideration the substantial budget attached to procurement. However, it did indicate an equipment strategy for the procurement with an implicit policy: the Annex 8 of the Financing Memorandum (FM) emphasised that the provision of equipment should take into account the future objective of replication of change throughout Romania, and that there would be no gain to national VET reform from equipping pilot schools in a manner that is too expensive to bear replication. The key would be to satisfy, at minimum cost, the new demands for equipment and materials central to: (a) the generalisation of curricula and (b) new teaching and learning methods.

The task of formulating an equipment policy was not mentioned either in the terms of reference for the long term technical assistance, and it appears that in the first phase of the programme no overall equipment policy and guidelines were formulated which discussed the strategy and principles proposed in the FP and converted it into an overall plan linked to national equipment policy. The implementation of the equipment component therefore was guided by other considerations, which are described in more detail below.

However, the political decision to disseminate the curricula nation-wide from September 1999 has prompted the need to formulate a policy and guidelines for the equipment aspect of the generalisation towards the more than 700 schools which will introduce the new curricula.

The equipment policy has two main elements: (1) the central preparation of a national standard which will serve as guidance on needed minimum equipment for each occupational area in the 3 school years and (2) the decentralisation of equipment procurement to county level which will be in effect from the new school year.

(1) Preparation of a national standard

The NCDVET is currently preparing a national minimum standard for equipment needed to sustain the curriculum. In this work experience is drawn from the Phare schools: proposals were collected from each of the 75 participating schools about equipment needed in the 1, 2 and 3rd years to sustain the curriculum. The proposals received differed quite a lot from school to school, providing an interesting basis for discussion.

The minimum standards are defined by comparing the school proposals and consulting specialists in the areas, including the National Curricula Commissions. Standard equipment lists for the 1st year were finalised and will be approved before the summer holidays. It is expected that similar lists for 2nd and 3rd year will be approved in September 99.

In many cases ambitions have had to be substantially reduced. Even so, it will be extremely difficult, if not impossible to meet these minimum standards from next school year, due to the very tight economic situation in the country.

(2) Decentralisation of equipment budget

The second element of the national equipment policy is the decision to decentralise the budget for new equipment for the schools to county level represented by the Inspectorates. The local municipalities are already responsible for the maintenance and running of the VET institutions, but now the local level will also be responsible for prioritisation of new equipment items to the VET institutions.

The national minimum equipment standards are a prerequisite and a support for this decentralisation to the county level. The new policy is coherent with the general decentralisation policy pursued by the Government in relation to VET. However, it is clear to all that the present situation is not unproblematic, especially in the current economic situation, when the public budget cannot cover fully the costs of the above defined minimum standards for the 1st year of secondary VET.

A part of the equipment policy under elaboration by the VET Centre is therefore the introduction of a new procedure and guidelines which will demand and encourage close collaboration and sharing of equipment between local schools, and which will include an allocation procedure. The procedure will request from each county Inspectorate a local equipment allocation plan, which allows for the reallocation of equipment within the network of schools if the educational offer makes this necessary.

When a school asks the Inspectorate for the approval of a new educational offer, the Inspectorate will be consulted as part of this procedure to verify if the school in question is equipped for the task and - if not -, if the programme should be placed elsewhere or equipment allocated from other schools.

The schools and Local Development Committees are keenly aware of the problems facing them regarding equipment. Reactions are very different, from an entrepreneurial attitude "We will try to find other sources of funding" to more despondent local school directors, who see no solution. However, no matter how inventive the local level is, the equipment deficit will remain a problem for many schools, especially in the less fortunate areas of the country.

Findings:

1. *The initiatives of the NCDVET towards sharing and co-ordination of equipment resources are most appropriate. In this connection it was mentioned as a policy that advanced equipment for the future should be introduced to the students in connection with their company practice and not be seen as required standard equipment in schools.*

   There would be sense in demanding more concrete assistance from some of the 75 schools who were fortunate to get equipment as part of the Phare programme. The rationale would be, that some schools received an upgrading of equipment, which put them years ahead of other VET schools in the local community. Apart from this, they also in many cases received substantial support from the municipality for the preparation of the facilities to house the equipment (tiling, electricity works, water and sanitation installations etc.). A number of these schools are able to sustain a certain level of production and sales thanks to these investments. In line with the decentralisation policy, the schools are allowed to keep the surplus from these activities and use it for a number of purposes. It

would only be fair, if these schools would be asked to contribute a share of their luck to the schools in the community who did not participate in Phare. For instance these schools could be asked to put 5-10% of their surplus into a solidarity fund for the next 3-5 years, enabling other schools to receive some of the minimum standard equipment like computers.

2. *Seen on a national level, the complete decentralisation of all equipment investment is a decision which may well deepen the gulf between fortunate and less fortunate counties. Therefore it is recommended to consider introducing mechanisms, which could counteract this negative tendency, e.g. by keeping a funding option for disadvantaged regions at central level. It is also recommended to maintain a facility at central level for the attraction of additional funding and co-ordination of purchases to obtain better conditions for schools in general (like it is the custom for e.g. software).*

IV.3.3 The process of organising needs specification and procurement

The equipment component was clearly dependent on what needs would be defined in relation to the new curricula.

The Financing Memorandum had outlined principles for the procurement, which should be as decentralised as possible, with responsibility passed down to the school compatibly with EU guidelines:

"VET schools have considerable procurement skills, which should be used, under supervision by the PMU. Much procurement can be in replicated packages. Procurement will be related to curriculum development progression in clusters of Pilot Schools (and in the Demonstration Schools). This might partly offset price advantages secured by central procurement.

Giving schools budget responsibility enhances their status in the community and makes them equal partners with employers. School directors need guidance and training in these areas."

The original strategy then was to divide the procurement process into a few steps to cover the needs defined in the curricula for the school years.

The foreign TA for procurement started work in November 1995. The TA was aware of the necessity for a clear strategy on, what kind of equipment could be purchased, to be developed, which would emphasise priority investments for pilot schools. Elements of an equipment procurement strategy were formulated:

- An analysis of existing equipment and special infrastructure of the pilot schools (demonstration schools only at a later stage) should be undertaken.
- The procurement should be guided by the principle that only essential equipment should be procured, meaning "no wide scatter" but instead preference for system solutions, equipment of individual laboratories to modern standards.

It was proposed to procure equipment specifications (through TA) for selected areas for determination of the equipment configuration and as a basis for the tendering proposed for spring 96. In the same period the work was started, which is now being resumed with the elaboration of minimum standard list, namely the preparation of general procurement recommendations for various occupational families (procurement planning guides).

The first activities in the equipment component were probing in search of an overall procurement method and organisation. This phase was characterised by gathering of information on available

equipment solutions for various areas, and trying to get an overview of existing equipment at the schools. For this purpose a questionnaire was designed concerning existing equipment and needs for the 75 schools. Also information meetings were held with suppliers of school equipment to be more informed about available options and visits by TA was made to selected schools for the evaluation of existing equipment.

It was pointed out that the tender for PS equipment could be started in May 96, but that the time frame for procurement of equipment for 1st and 2nd school year was not appropriate, since the curricula were not finalised yet. It was also stated that the budget could not cover a general modernisation of school equipment according to EU standards, and that therefore a major project objective would not be achieved. The question is, however, if the original concept of replicability contained in the FP was appropriate and compatible with the goal of reaching EU standards. This is discussed further down.

According to the contractor the task appeared to be extremely complex, way off the experience of the Ministry and the PMU, - in particular deciding on the most efficient procurement method was difficult. Finally in May 96 an agreement was reached between the ETF, the EC delegation, the long term TA and the MoNE to tender for a procurement agent, who would be in charge of the whole process, from identification of the equipment needs to the final installation and user training in the schools.

In view of this decision, the procurement and curriculum experts were in charge of the identification and procurement of didactic equipment in the summer of 1996: OH, video, transparencies, drawing and office materials etc, so that the schools would receive a minimum of equipment for the first year of implementation.

The tender for an equipment procurement agent was launched in July 96 to 12 shortlisted EU agencies. In mid September an Agency was selected: the AGMIN Group Italy - however, the contract signature was delayed. By December 1996 the procurement agent could start working. From this time on the procurement activity developed systematically and timely.

During the first months of 1997 10 short-term TA cross-checked indicative lists of items requested by schools. The experts were asked to focus on necessities and not just wishes. It was not an easy task, as the curricula, for which the needs were defined, were either not there yet, or available in Romanian only. During the next few months specifications were developed and the tendering process could start around the end of March 1997.

Apart from a smaller tender for office equipment to demonstration schools (127.150 ECU) run in the Spring of 97, and a small specialist database software, the main tender for the basic and specialist equipment, which had originally been conceived as two tender rounds parallel to the curricula development, was aggregated into one large tender for a total of 11 Lots comprising 1.300 separate items. The tender dossiers took into account the European standard issue, specifying the need to supply warranty, spare parts, accessories and training in proper use and regular maintenance. It was stated that equipment should fully comply with Phare rules, that they should be manufactured in an ISO9001 or equivalent, certified facility, and that all equipment should meet relevant EC standards. The items should be the latest version / model at the time of contract.

The tender was run in late spring, followed by an evaluation from 1 July to 8 August 97 of a total of 29 bids.

Parallel to this, needs identification and planning of necessary site preparation (installations, tiling etc) went on.

In early September the winning tenderers had been identified, allocating the following contract sums to the 11 lots.

Lot 1: IT	1.955.650,50 ECU
Lot 2: Audio-visual, finances and services	970.215,78 ECU
Lot 3, 5, 9: Agriculture, Mechanics, Materials Technology, Transport, Minerals, Extraction and Processing of Ores, Oil, Gas and Industrial Chemicals	5.865.361,46 ECU
Lot 4: Construction and Public Works	391.025,00 ECU
Lot 6: Health and Environmental Protection	87.909,00 ECU
Lot 7: Electronics and Energetics	1.641.526,00 ECU
Lot 8,11: Leather and Textile	2.022.567,00 ECU
Lot 10: Food Industry, Public Catering, Tourism and Hotel	2.349.234,09 ECU
Total	**15.283,489,00 ECU**

The first lots were delivered in the period 1 September to 1 December 97.

The process of delivery and installation of the main equipment from the first round encountered problems here and there, but luckily quite a few of these problems could be met by the second tender. The preparatory installations were financed by the local municipalities of the schools. In some cases it represented a substantial sum: up to 200.000 USD due to the comprehensive upgrading which took place at some schools.

According to one of the school representatives the local social partnership in some places only started being more than just polite confirmations in word, when the local community saw the new equipment arriving to the local school. This finally convinced some local social partners, that the Phare programme was "talking business".

The winning bids had been so advantageous that the remaining balance of the Special Fund exceeded 1.5 MECU. Therefore in the summer of 1998 a second tender was prepared which included additional equipment in 6 lots for the remaining sum. This last tender was run in the period 2 September to 13 October 1998. This tender included some of the missing items, which had not been included in the first tender, due to for instance lack of sufficient information on items needed for the larger installations like e.g. a small dairy plant.

The last items of this last tender for the balance were being delivered to the schools, having been through a lengthy customs clearing, exactly at the time of the evaluation mission in May 99.

The procurement agent had finished their work, which must be characterised as quite successful - especially in view of the large scale. Their final report mentioned a problem of repairment of certain very specialised items which normally require shipment abroad, because this is not possible due to Romanian regulations. It seems, however, that until now the problem has been solved by technical maintenance experts coming to Romania instead.

Findings:

The equipment component raises a number of interesting issues.

1. *First of all the relevance of the initial concept put forward by the Financing Memorandum: to equip the Romanian pilot schools in a replicable way and yet to European standards. There seems to be an in-built contradiction in the concept. Romanian VET schools are in general very much lagging behind in relation to equipment. Most schools have no or only a few computers, the professional equipment is insufficient and mostly old, the whole teaching materials basis (dictionaries etc.) is extremely limited and in need of upgrading, laboratory and furniture standards are very basic. The investment needed to bring the schools as such up to a European standard - in itself a difficult term, since differences between equipment standards in VET schools are large between EU member states - is enormous so it will not be possible for the Ministry of National Education to bring the schools up to a European standard within the next 10 years no*

matter what the equipment policy of the Phare programme was - due to the sheer volume of schools (more than 700 nation-wide).

2. *The next question then is: was the actual approach taken sensible? Instead of taking the road of the standardised level, the equipment component was in many cases instrumental in building up local centres of excellence regarding professional equipment. At least this is the impression left by the visit to 14 of the Phare schools. No uniform verdict can be passed on this, since the situation of the schools and the branches they serve vary a lot.*

   A few examples may illustrate the point: the School Group of Polygraphics and Cinematography in Bucharest with 1.700 students is the only of its kind in Romania. The branch has experienced a virtual explosion in the need for qualified workers following the Revolution, when freedom of press provoked the cropping up of dozens of new printed media, radio and TV stations. The school has received a substantial up-grading in the context of the Phare programme, equipping the professional workshops from A to Z with modern equipment by Heidelberg and other first rate European suppliers, which lives up to European health and safety standards.The school expressed that it received most of what it had wished and it seemed that the equipment is being used intensively.

   But in spite of its high present equipment standard the school´s budget for running costs is of course still very limited. Therefore the school´s own strategy is to become 1) a centre of excellence for the branch and 2) to be able to supplement its budget by maintaining a certain level of production by attracting printing tasks from the external environment.

   A similar thinking is behind the equipment strategy of the School Group of Economics, Administration and Services in Calimanesti (Carpathians). Through the Phare programme the school has become financially autonomous to a very high degree, helped further in this direction by the decentralisation policy of the Government.

   In general those Phare schools which are able to produce something which is demanded by the market - either food products, printed materials or similar - are in a good position, and at some of the school groups which are not yet able to do this the wish was heard to adopt such educational programmes with a view to developing a similar high degree of autonomy, giving access to financing of innovative projects and equipment items, performance oriented salary components to the staff (who on average receive 75-100 USD a month), reduced prices of meals to students etc.

3. *The existence of production at a VET school prompts questions like: whether the balance between didactical considerations and production is kept or whether the production demands compromises in relation to the teaching and learning process? Another question which at least is put for similar activities in EU member states: is it fair competition with private companies? The Ministry of National Education is aware of the difficult balance and that it may not be perfect in some schools, however, in view of the acute struggle for the material basis the attitude of the MoNE towards these schools and their production activities is currently very tolerant. On the basis of the past experience it sees the danger of excessive focus on production as minimal.*

   Before 1989 schools were much more purely production oriented, having regular production plans and they were putting too much emphasis on producing at the expense of teaching. The Ministry sometimes had to ask the schools to take more didactic considerations. Now the view of the MoNE is, that the production is seen not as a main activity - but as a natural consequence of training for the world of work. The new curriculum is formed in such a way that it helps them "keep within limits".

   However, some schools may still find it difficult. A recommendation would be to allocate resources to the development of didactic strategies for producing schools which takes into account the perspective of competition, and to develop the methodology of teaching and learning under these particular conditions.

4. *Is the equipment being used? This question can definitely be answered positively. In all the 14 schools visited during the evaluation, the Phare equipment was being used very intensively: at some of the schools the equipment is used in 2 or 3 shifts a day: morning, afternoon and evening. The equipment was delivered quite late for the start of the pilot implementation, due to the overall delay of the start of the procurement process. This meant for instance that the first generation of Phare students only had access to the new computers during the last year of their studies. However, the impression is that the staff and students of the schools have managed in this short time to start using the equipment in a good and often very innovative way, profiting from the new opportunities offered for the learning process by e.g. the World Wide Web.*

   The latest initiatives by the NCDVET for the optimal use of equipment through local allocation schemes, the gradual process of reducing capacities in schools representing crisis stricken branches and the Ministry's initiative to merge smaller schools into local school centres, which has been started recently, will contribute to the overall solution seen in the longer perspective, but the current problem of the equipment needed for the generalisation of the Phare curricula and the lack of the material basis is genuine and indeed very serious.

   It should not be forgotten though that the new curricula present much more than a modernised technology basis. First and foremost they represent a new approach to teaching and learning as part of a new democratic and market economic culture, the dissemination of which demands a continued and intensive effort.

IV.4 Partnership Arrangements

IV.4.1 Overview

The FP succinctly mentioned the development of international links for pilot and demonstration schools with EU VET institutions as one of the 6 main activities in the programme component concerning national level actions and policy framework. A strategy for the partnerships was laid out in the first Strategic Plan as follows:

"that the EU partnership links project shall support the successful establishment of partnerships between Romanian professional schools and similar institutions throughout Europe, realising future teacher and pupil exchange and associating foreign know-how to the curricula development process and implementation. Partnerships shall foot on study tours as a first activity to get to know each other's basis, however, shall develop into long-term relationships lasting during the project period and after. " (p. 7).

The budget for the partnerships was part of the overall budget for EU links, partnership and training (1.426 MECU). The Strategic Plan outlined the expected outputs as

1. established links between PS/DS and EU partners (schools, institutes, organisations,) emphasising - future cooperation, contribution to further reform activities and cross-border information exchange.

2. established database of cooperation network with relevant partner schools and education institutes in EU countries.

The Strategic Plan also foresaw that links should last during the whole period of project implementation and build the base for long-term cooperation among the partners beyond this programme.

IV.4.2 The policy for the partnerships

A particular policy was not formulated for the specific partnership activity, it was seen as part of the overall EU orientation in curriculum development which was expressed in several documents like the *"Reform of VET through the Phare VET Programme. Policies and Strategies for the Curriculum development"*. This orientation is recognised in the following aspects and principles of the implementation: The VET curriculum was to be seen as a consequence of the new market trends of training the human resources, including the development towards the qualification recognition within the European Union. The inclusion of functional communication in foreign languages became a compulsory part of the new curriculum model and the general subjects overall were to reflect the EU orientation. The elaboration of the educational plan was to be based on the number of classes per year in the EU countries.

The partnerships were also regarded as an important part of the school manager training, since the visit to EU schools gave them an opportunity to study the type of school which the decentralisation policy was and is aiming towards: autonomous and multifunctional schools with an active network and close collaboration with the local social and other partners, but also allowing the Romanian school representatives to experience the democratic school management style as well as the customer oriented educational process.

IV.4.3 Establishment of the partnership programme and network

Originally it was planned that the partnership activity should start in spring 1996, but the planning was too optimistic. During this time the decision was made to tender out the organisation of the activity. Terms of reference were defined and a tender was run in early summer 96 with 12 shortlisted EU companies.

The Terms of Reference ambitiously listed 9 objectives of the activity:

1. To learn modern organisational and pedagogical methods practised already at the partner school.
2. To compare and analyse the curricula used for the occupational families in the partner school and
3. To analyse and discuss modern didactical technologies used or needed in the educational process.
4. To learn the didactical materials and the equipment used or needed in the educational process.
5. To plan and elaborate continuous and final evaluation methodologies with regard to specific needs of the respective occupational family.
6. To learn how to organise and manage school and partnership activities.
7. To learn methods in organising VET programmes.
8. To develop partnership relation/co-operation between the schools and higher institutions of education/ economic operators.
9. To establish co-operation with enterprises and companies for qualified VET.

A total of 6 offers were received and a winning proposal selected in September 1996 presented by Holstebro Technical College in Denmark. During October the programme details were agreed in 2 visits to Romania and the pilot schools were informed about the plans in detail, emphasising the objectives of the study visit to EU schools and the responsibility of the pilot schools towards disseminating their experience to the demonstration schools afterwards. The preparations for the launch of the activity were thorough, including a planning visit by the contractor to all the selected EU partner schools to ensure that there was consensus on the objectives.

The activity consisted of a two-week visit in November-December 1996 based on a common programme to 18 schools in 5 different EU countries (Italy, United Kingdom, Sweden, Germany and Denmark) by the pilot school directors and representatives of the teaching staff (42 directors and 133 teachers). The evaluation of the visits that was done independently by each EU host school and by the

participants from the Romanian participants, indicates that the programme was quite successful from several standpoints: structure of the program, contents, interest and motivation, and organisational aspects.

Following the visit abroad, a workshop was organised for the Romanian school participants by the Institute of Educational Sciences for the evaluation of the partnership visits and for the identification of priority areas for each school to develop as a follow up to the visit. Each pilot school was supported in developing an individual programme, which was to be approved by the local Inspectorate and the PMU. As an important part of this a reciprocal visit by the European partner schools was planned, for which a maximum budget of 230.700 ECU was reserved. This so-called "In-country partnership" took place in the period 7-26 April 1997 organised by the PMU.

The programme, which also to some extent involved the demonstration schools, covered some of the following main areas: management aspects of the schools, improvement of methodology, development of the teaching aids, implementation of the curriculum and the pedagogical approach, and the relationship between the training offered by the school and the socio-economic reality in which the school operates.

The mid term evaluation from the summer of 1997 found that the EU partnership programme was building too much on a standard model, not allowing for individual tailoring of the activity for each partnership. The present evaluation does not share this view for the following reasons: the decision of the PMU to tender out the activity to an external contractor and the tight time schedule contained in the TORs made it sensible to organise the first visit activity on a standard programme. Apart from this, the implementation of the visits over a concentrated period of time made it possible to make the above mentioned follow up evaluation meetings in Romania, allowing for a fruitful exchange of experience between the Romanian participants. The very individual projects developed by some of the schools afterwards confirm that the standard programme was no barrier to the tailoring of projects.

Findings:

1. *Did the EU school partnerships meet the objectives? Taking into account all the limitations imposed by limited financing opportunities for long term relationships, the answer must be "yes". The terms of reference for the activity were very ambitious in view of the limited time frame of 2 weeks followed up by one week in Romania. But thanks to the strict planning of the programme the activities provided the Romanian schools with basic information about most of the key issues listed, and what is important: quite a number of partners managed to continue their relationship (see below).*

   Seen from the present it is only to be regretted that the partnership activities financed in the context of the Phare programme ended after the revisit of the EU schools. It would have been valuable if a number of more tailored follow up activities could have been at least cofinanced. It would have been a valuable contribution to both the curriculum development and teacher training activities. Instead the schools could only turn to the Leonardo, Socrates and Tempus programmes on an individual basis for cofinancing of further co-operation with their partners, or cater for local donors.

   None the less, the schools visited expressed great satisfaction with the activity and appreciated this opportunity to experience how VET schools function in full-fledged market economies. The schools emphasised among other things that they had been struck by the very close collaboration and cohesion with the labour market and the local employment office which they had seen in the EU member states: "We learned from our partners about the issues of true social partnership". They also underlined that the partnership visit gave opportunities to see what is really to be understood by "interdisciplinary" teaching in its developed form.

2. *At the time of the mid-term evaluation the issue of the sustainability of partnerships was of course difficult to judge, since only a few months had passed since the end of the revisit by the EU partners. At that time only one school seemed to have a sustainable partnership. The present evaluation has therefore sought to shed light on the issue of sustainability by mid 99, more than 2 years after the end of the last partnership activity.*

   The situation looks rather good. Out of the 14 schools visited during the mission, the majority still has contacts either with their partner school or with other EU schools. A number of schools have had or are conducting project activities cofinanced either by Leonardo or Socrates, and several are presently preparing to hand in applications in connection with the last Romanian round of Leonardo. Most projects build on exchange projects, and some schools have obtained very concrete competencies through their partnerships, e.g. on how to build up a business plan and how to design manuals for distance education or open learning.

   In this connection it should be mentioned that the schools would like to extend the use of simulated or realistic learning environments or even real production environments on a small scale, e.g. by establishing a branch office of a bank. Some schools are looking towards their EU partners to learn how to implement e.g. the simulated enterprises.

   In general the opportunity to go abroad and learn in the context of EU VET systems was very fruitful and is therefore sought continued by the participants: "We learned about cultures, the community and that education is not only a national matter."

3. *The PMU tried to follow up on the partnership links after the end of directly Phare financed activities. Its staff saw it as their task to support the schools in integrating the experiences gained abroad into the Romanian context. The former PMU staff finds that the partnership activities did make a tangible contribution to the reform, as can be seen from several facts: first of all, the contents of the modules and the teaching practice illustrated in them is definitely inspired by the EU experience. Also it seemed that the relation of didactics and equipment became a lot easier for the teachers who had the opportunity to see how this is done abroad.*

4. *As part of the upgrading of equipment the schools received computer labs and Internet connections The importance of the new ICT should definitely be mentioned in connection with the partnerships, as they have also opened up to international collaboration. Some of the schools can already present excellent best practice in integrating ICT and international collaboration into the learning process. We would like to emphasise the small Economic and Administrative School Group in Targoviste. The school was a demonstration school and therefore did not have the opportunity to travel abroad. But the school is using the new equipment optimally for international collaboration. - Unfortunately, a few of the visited schools have not renewed their Internet subscriptions due to the relatively high running costs.*

5. *The issue of decentralisation versus central support is relevant to pull forward also in connection with the partnership activity. The need for co-ordination of information and initiatives and provision of necessary further training of school staff in the design of and running of projects is acknowledged by the Department of Human Resources, MoNE, however, until now it seems not to have been possible to attach resources to this. Reference is made to the Leonardo office, which was established in 1997, for technical support of local partnership initiatives. However, the Leonardo offices are programme specific and have a limited function compared with what is needed.*

   Both the Ministry and the NCDVET try to encourage and welcome bi- and multilateral contacts and projects on all levels, but the limitation in human and material resources is still a barrier to a systematic effort.

In view of pre-accession and the introduction of structural funds already from 2000, it is highly recommended that the Ministry strengthens the support structure both in the Department for VET and in the NCDVET for development of local and regional educational links with EU member states. Also it should seek to attract additional resources for the intensification of the Europeanisation process at national and regional/local level including the qualification of e.g. school staff and other local educational partners in design and implementation of local and regional development projects based on partnerships. The extraordinary commitment and communication competencies found among staff in the VET system forms an excellent resource basis which should be systematically developed.

IV. 5 Introduction of Social Partnership

IV.5.1 The formation of a new type of partnership

One of the four immediate objectives of the Phare programme was to seek development of social partnership with employers in defining and implementing VET as one of the basic pillars of a new demand oriented VET system.

In the VET system which existed before the reform there had been strong links between the branches and the educational sector both on a local and on national level. On the local level many schools had developed close relations with local state companies who recruited their workers directly from these schools. Often the schools were existing almost as a part of the factories.

On the national level the links were equally strong. Until the adoption of the new Law of Education (1995) all vocational schools had had a double subordination: to the Ministry of National Education and to the Ministry representing the branch. In accordance with this system, all curricula were approved first by the MoNE and secondly, by the branch ministry to ascertain its relevance for the branch. All the involved branch ministries had a unit for VET, which was in charge of this task. But of course the relation between the educational sector and the branches was based on the socialist economy.

After the revolution and the adoption of the new Law the Ministry of National Education took over the full responsibility for the VET institutions, and the development of a new relationship between the VET sector and the social partners was started.

This development was based on the establishment of a new structure in the second half of 1995, directly linked with the Phare VET programme, consisting of a National Advisory Group and 6 Zonal VET development committees in Timisoara, Bucharest, Brasov, Cluj, Iasi and Craiova, in which the local key stakeholders in VET were to start developing their joint responsibility for the development of demand oriented VET.

The National Advisory Group consisted of 23 members from ministries, employers, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the trade unions. The role of the Advisory Group was defined as advising the Phare programme steering committee and ensuring that the reform strategy applied would be in accordance with the Law on Education and ensure that the Romanian VET system would develop in the direction required for European integration. The Advisory Group had its first meeting in September 1995.

The Zonal VET development committees (ZDCs) were organised at the regional level. A first set of Regulations was drafted which stated the tasks and responsibilities of the committees. Their basic tasks were to inform the schools of the local demands and to assist the schools in ensuring the labour market relevance of the VET programmes developed for the employability of the graduates. At local level Local VET Development Committees (LDCs) were organised in each participating county.

Not surprisingly the role of the ZDCs and LDCs in the first phase was not very strong, since the committees had no prior experience of this type of work and were lacking both a clear working methodology and clear distribution of responsibilities. The quarterly evaluation conducted in the second half of 1996 pointed out this weakness and that the role of the ZDCs and LCDs in the concrete reform work could not be considered to be very satisfactory. Therefore a number of measures were planned for the 4th Work Programme (May to October 97) to strengthen their active participation. Three types of measures were taken:

1) In the late spring of 1997 the committees were strengthened through the appointment of 6 zonal cluster co-ordinators, which were linked directly to the Phare PMU which supported them in their work. This was laid down in the Regulations in which the ZDCs were described "as organisational and operational cores having as target the promotion and development of the social partnership for VET in order to support the Phare VET programme for vocational and technical education in the territory." The activity of the Zonal Committees were to be guided by the PMU which would appoint the zonal coordinator and ensure the required methodological training, coordination and support by means of the structures created at national level within the programme.

2) The ZDCs tasks were defined much more concretely as:
- providing the organisational frame and "managerial structure" for the preparation and support of the dissemination process of efficient social partnership approaches for VET at the local level.
- promote the model of institutional collaboration in the provision of VET
- contribute to the achievement of social-economical analyses and prognoses involving the social partners and the specific institutions
- contribute to the correlation, promotion and harmonisation of local action strategies in the fulfilment of the objectives established through the Phare VET reform programme
- facilitate the exchange of information and experience between the counties included in the ZDC.
- organise periodical meetings and joint discussions with the representatives of the LCDs
- ensure efficient and operative connections with the PMU
- organise information and data relevant for the reform process and
- contribute to the dissemination of the reform programme.

3) Provision of training in the concept and methodology of social partnership for the members in the ZDCs and LDCs both in late 1997 and during 1998.

These measures greatly improved the work of and participation of the ZDCs and LCDs in the concrete reform activities in general. The regular evaluations conducted during late 1997 and late 1998[9] showed marked progress concerning:
- the degree of representation of the social partners in the committees
- the categories of economic agents represented
- the participation of the local authorities
- the interest of the social partners in the concrete problems encountered by the Phare schools
- the team-work and the communication within the committees

In view of sustainability it was crucial that the experience and achievements gained within these structures, which were originally established through Phare, and which referred to the management structure of the Phare programme, were embedded in the national legislation as a permanent structure. This happened in 1997 when the Emergency Ordinance for the modification of the Law on Education no. 84/1995 established the consultative structures on a permanent basis both at the local and national levels. A National Council for Initial and Continuing Training was established, integrating as part of its tasks the role of the National Advisory Group.

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[9] The latest functioning regulation is attached in the Annexes.

IV.5.2 The new role of the schools

The introduction of social partnership, however, also demands a change in the role of the VET institutions from a supplier into being an active, flexible and responsive regional and local VET provider in a dialogue with the local community. The Phare programme actively supported this change through the manager and teacher training, through the EU partnerships and the regular workshops for the discussion of key issues in the reform work.

The evaluation found that the visited Phare schools had understood the importance of this change and were doing a conscious and serious effort to introduce this thinking in their schools and into their working relations with the local partners.

Findings:

1. *The Phare VET programme can be said to have reached its objective by being instrumental in establishing the basis of social partnership by initiating a tripartite advisory structure at national, regional and local levels and defining its tasks and responsibilities. In July 1997 this structure was adopted as a national permanent structure, introducing a National Council for Initial and Continuing Training. The progress made especially during the last year of the programme is particularly positive and impressive, especially in relation to the economic branches which represent the growth areas. But also in the most crisis-stricken economic branches the collaboration has brought about a growing awareness of the necessity to meet the needs of the labour market e.g. in terms of reduction of numbers of students in the more traditional areas. A common understanding and awareness of what social partnership implies has been achieved among the participants in the programme on all levels. This experience is being disseminated actively to all schools as part of the generalisation programme. Still, it is clear that social partnership has only just begun and that a lot of work is still needed to ensure the genuine sustainability of the new collaboration.*

2. *During the lifetime of the Phare programme the PMU more or less set the overall agenda for the work of the committees and provided funding for the local development work at the schools. After the end of the Phare programme the committees seem to experience a certain vacuum, both in terms of a common agenda and in terms of necessary funding. Some of the more advanced committees are very aware of this and are working on the issues and seeking in every possible way to attract extra-budgetary funding. In view of the very limited project experience of the members, there would be a need to provide additional training for key members of the committees in project design and management, which will enable the ZDCs and LDCs to start preparing applications for EU funding which will start coming in from next year.*

V. Impact and sustainability of the programme on the overall VET reform process

V.1 Generalisation – from pilot project to VET system implementation

The reform of education in Romania is now high on the political agenda. Since 1998 the reform process has been accelerated as a reform of contents that assimilates the reform of the system, the reform by radiation from successful experience and allows for the acceleration of change. According to the Minister of Education, Mr Andrei Marga, there is an urgent need for the reform of education, and implementation of new principles, methodologies and practices should now be implemented without further delay and without any further experimenting and testing. The changes are long overdue and the expertise is in place. The reform is based on decentralisation.

As a major step in the education reform a pilot project has just been launched nation-wide. A number of "representation schools" (chosen from all types of schools and including VET schools) have been selected in each county and will form a network where new models of financing, administration and employment and further training of teachers will be tested. Decentralisation is necessary also for a more efficient resource allocation. The Inspectorate staff in the counties is not always good at defining the total number of students, which leads to a wrong dimensioning of the education system. These measures have just been set forth by the Minister. The ambition is to give added flexibility in the system, to open up the schools to more market incentives and less bureaucratic control, and to increase the democratic elements in school governance. The programme is organised as a pilot project, the results of which will be assessed before further actions are taken. Although this is an experiment only involving some schools, the initiative indicates a serious willingness to make quite radical changes in a hitherto extremely centralised education system.

As part of this overall education reform cycle the Romanian Minister of Education in the final stages of the Phare VET project therefore decided that the new and successful Phare VET curricula must be implemented in all VET schools in the country from the 1999 school year. The implementation process is currently being undertaken. The products – curricula and didactic materials - have begun to be disseminated and teacher training is going on in the 6 zonal territories where pilot schoolteachers will teach other VET teachers. It was an important element in the training of VET staff component that teachers from pilot schools should be specifically trained to become trainers of other teachers; they will have an important role now in the national generalisation programme.

Not only the vocational education and post high school programmes will be covered. Also the technical high schools (one step higher, the upper secondary school level) will introduce the new curriculum principles from the start of the 1999 school year.

The decision to generalise the Phare VET principles was formulated in two ministerial orders:

1) The educational plans for the post high school were approved by *Order of the MoNE no. 3207/03.02.1999.*
2) The *Ministry of National Education Order no. 3540/02.04.1999* approved the syllabi for the first school year.

The methodology refers to the generalisation of:
- The vocational school
- The post high school
- The reform of the technical high school.

The following measures are established to generalise the results of the Phare programme in the vocational schools and in relation to the post high schools:

1. Information of the target groups:

Students, parents, teachers from the gymnasium, social partners, VET schools others than the Phare schools will be informed about the objectives, principles and the organisation of the curriculum changes. The Inspectorates together with the Houses of Teaching Staff, the Local Development Committees and the Phare VET school managers must organise the orientation and counselling of the students on the basis of a required time schedule. It is recommended to use the mass media to disseminate the information. The National Centre for the Development of VET (the former PMU) in an advisory role supports the Ministry of Education and the county Inspectorates in this process.

2. The ensurance of the human and material resources for the generalisation:

On the basis of the necessary equipment recommended by the Phare pilot schools as a prerequisite to apply the new curricula, the Inspectorate will be responsible for establishing investment projects and will be in charge of rationalising the VET school network. The Inspectorate will furthermore be responsible for organising the courses of teacher training needed for teachers to be able to implement the new curricula.

3. In February-March 1999 Local Development Committees meetings were to be organised:

Here the Inspectorate should inform about 1) its planned generalisation activities; 2) analysis and approval of the number of students for 1999-2000 in each vocational field; and 3) analysis and approval of proposals for new trades or modifications to the list of trades and specialisations in vocational education training.

Concerning the technical high school reform starting with the school year 1999-2000 new education plans must be applied. The occupational structure and the curricula for the technical high school must follow the conception which was the basis for the Phare VET programme.

Findings:

1. *The generalisation of curricula will be extremely difficult under the given conditions. With the Phare VET reform model based on pilot schools there is an in-built discrimination between schools inside and outside the programme. Two systems are today working in parallel in Romania: the elitist system with EU-standard schools and the old system with Romanian schools constituting 90% of all VET schools. Some resentment has been expressed by non-Phare schools. Discrimination is also visible. The difficulty is now to carry the message from the favoured few to the others, the majority. With the economic crisis this will be very difficult. The cost of equipment has been very high in the pilot and demonstration schools. It is unfathomable to spread this level and standard of equipment to all VET schools. Can the curricula be taught without modern equipment? The same challenge is posed by the sheer scale of the teacher training needed to prepare teachers and foremen to be capable of managing teaching under the new system. Luckily, comparatively many schools have been involved: 25 pilot and 50 demonstration schools. But they are unevenly spread throughout the 41 counties. And a high number of the county Inspectorates have expressed doubts about the possibility to generalise the new programme if no extra money is allocated for this task. It is an advantage that a detailed curricular material and ready-to-use didactical guidelines are available. But without a considerable amount of external funding, the generalisation programme is really in trouble. This argument was also heavily underlined by most of the representatives from the county Inspectorates who took part in the final evaluation meeting with the evaluators in Bucharest. At the end of May – just four months before the new school year starts – surprisingly little preparation of dissemination and training activities seem to have taken place.*

2. *The great difficulty that educational reform in Romania is facing is the low level of funding allocated by the Government for the support and the development of the educational infrastructure, the acquisition of new assets and equipment, and the payment of attractive wages to teachers. The risk of generalisation is a situation where VET schools will not be financially supported leading to a situation of "swim or sink" with some 75 schools in a very strong competitive situation and the rest in deep trouble. VET schools and high schools are increasingly seen as autonomous institutions. Their autonomy consists in their independence to collect and use their extra-budget funds, in their freedom to establish the local part of their curriculum, in their participation in the selection of their teaching staff and in the design and application of their own development programmes. But the non-Phare schools will not be able to profit from the new system where extra-budgetary resources are left at the sole use of the schools free to use them autonomously. The playing field is simply too uneven. These schools must have extra endowments. One promising mechanism might be to put a "solidarity tax" on the Phare schools which, due to the advanced equipment they got free of charge, have the capacity to and in fact do produce marketable goods to be sold on market terms. It would only seem fair that they for say the next five years contributed to the financing of the backward standing VET schools.*

3. *A special challenge is the fact that rural areas and small towns in general have not been favoured by the Phare VET programme. One example to be mentioned is the school in Sinaia, a small town. The school was not involved in the Phare programme but has made eager use of the new curricula and the new teaching principles. It is difficult for children to integrate in the local areas. They must go to the bigger towns to have a relevant VET education but their parents cannot afford it. So the small town schools are forced to scan their local labour market all the time and to continuously set up classes of relevance to the needed job profiles in the region. They have had to give up their traditional qualification production structure. They are forced to use whatever production facilities they can find for practical learning activities and to find guest teachers and foremen for the different professions. But they need support to cope with this challenge. The school in Sinai argued that the Phare programme had been beneficial to all and that they had learned a lot from the Phare schools. But the Phare programme has had to take care of the selected schools, predominantly in bigger towns, and has only to a very limited extent been able to involve some of the others. The problem with the imbalance between big town and small town schools should be given careful attention in the generalisation phase.*

4. *The experienced team of Phare teacher trainers now form part of the general national team teacher trainers for the massive dissemination through training of the headmasters and teachers which is now needed. But reportedly, there is no money at all in the Ministry of Education for this massive teacher-training programme. The training which has been fully left over to the county Inspectorate, is in jeopardy. Some counties have had only one school involved in the Phare programme, and they will have difficulties. The zonal inspectors will support the activity. The actual training is mostly undertaken by local Phare teachers. In general, the reaction of the trained Phare schoolteachers has been very positive to take part in the generalisation. They really enjoy being trainers of teachers. So the human resources are in place for a reform campaign based on the trained teachers. But money will be required. The counties must organise the training with or without money. There is no choice at all. The responsibility is totally placed at the county level.*

5. *The Phare programme has meant deep-going changes in VET teaching and learning didactics and methods. In reality we are talking about a radical reform which will take at least 10 years to fully implement. One crucial factor for success is the teachers´ pedagogical capacities. Too little attention has been paid to the pre-service VET teacher training taking place at the universities and the training of foremen taking place elsewhere. Steps should immediately be taken to modernise the curricula and working methods of VET teacher training so that all new teachers in the coming years may become not only familiar with the new principles but may even become important change agents in the VET sector. This is not an easy task. Pre-service teacher training takes place*

at autonomous universities, is still too academic and scholastic, and is not particularly "functional" in relation to the teacher profession. The same goes for foremen´s training. This is an important step to be taken immediately and which will not require extreme costs. It would be natural for the already experienced team of teacher trainers to be involved in this refocusing of the pre-service teacher training.

V.2 Strengthening of administrative and support capacities

V.2.1 The local, county level

The Ministry of National Education is pursuing a policy of decentralisation from the national to the local level, the objective of which is to empower the local level to react more flexible to the needs of the local labour market. In this connection the schools have already been granted the right to keep the extra-budgetary income they may be able to generate; from the next school year equipment purchase becomes a local issue (however problematic it is in the current situation) and schools are allowed to start post-high school courses flexibly, if requested by the local community and paid by the local participants.

A next step in the decentralisation concerns the important right to select your own staff: The establishment of the so-called "representative educational institutions" from next school year gives 220 pre-university schools - including also some VET institutions - the right for the first time to conduct their own recruitment exercise for the selection of new teaching staff under the supervision of the MoNE. The Specifications stipulate that the MoNE shall consult the social partners when producing the compulsory minimal grid of selection criteria[10].

V.2.2 The national level

The abolishment of the principle of double subordination transferred the full responsibility for the schools to the MoNE, which until 1998 had only a minuscule department responsible for VET. It is worth emphasising that the Romanian Ministry of Education realised the need to strengthen the central administrative basis and therefore undertook organisational development in the area of Human resources on a scale which is - as far as we are informed - unprecedented in the other Phare countries.

In the period 1997 to 1999 the Ministry added several new directorates to its organisational structure, set within the overall framework of the so-called *General Directorate for Human Resources:*

(a) *Directorate for Personnel, School Network and Management,*
(b) *Directorate for VET and*
(c) *Directorate for Life-long Learning and Social Insertion*[11].

The competencies and tasks of the General Directorate and its Directorates are attached in the Annexes. The former head of PMU, Mrs Madlen Serban, was appointed director of the General Directorate.

On 1st January 1999, when the Phare VET Reform Programme had ended, a *National Centre for the Development of Vocational and Technical Education* was officially opened. The National Centre which is foreseen to have more than 60 staff, when fully established, is currently situated in the

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[10] See annexes.
[11] Decision no. 102, 1998: "The development and implementation of the life-long learning system through educational institutions".

premises of the MoNE but it is formally a separate institution, an agency of the Ministry in charge of the national co-ordination of VET development[12]. The Centre continues the work on curriculum started under the Phare VET Programme. The sustainability of the continued VET reform is supported through the circumstance that 8 former PMU staff now works in the NCDVET, which is led by Mrs Madlen Serban.

V.3 The design of a policy and legal framework

Romania with the support of the EU Phare programme and also the World Bank, has made substantial steps towards modernising training content and has proceeded to create institutions which will support VET development. Now it is vital to develop a more systematic and coherent approach to the reform process and to anchor in the results achieved by developing a legal framework for vocational education and training and to continue the already initiated efforts of institution building. There is still not yet a systematic, comprehensive and coherent approach to the reform process, even if some elements are underway.

Until now there has been no comprehensive and targeted legislation on vocational education and training. Provisions for initial vocational training are included in the Education Law (No. 84/1995). An addendum to the Education Law, Emergency Ordinance of July 1997, was issued by the Romanian Government. This amendment contained 4 important elements:

1. the Phare programme Advisory Group became the National Council for Continuing Training and Education and thus a permanent consultative body of the Ministry of Education;
2. the Local Development Committees organised under the Phare programme became part of the consultative board under the county school Inspectorate;
3. education can now also be financed directly by the economic agents; and
4. the Ministry of Education may establish a National Fund for Vocational Training.

In most of the documents produced in the Phare VET reform programme in Romania, the policy aspects and strategy issues are defined as questions of curriculum design, delivery and outcome. This is of course the most essential plank of the Phare VET reform programme but it is not sufficient. VET reform is more than curriculum reform. Curriculum reform occurs in a transformation and policy context. Indeed, one of the problems of the implementation of the Phare VET programme in the CEECs is that similar curricular philosophies were applied during the same time period to entirely different transformation circumstances. From the strategy and policy perspective even more attention should be concentrated in the coming years on institution building, continuity and infrastructure.

Cezar Birzea in *"The Dilemmas of the Reform of Romanian Education: Shock Therapy, the Infusion of Innovation, or Cultural Decommunization?"*[13] remarks:

Comparative analyses of post communist countries reveal four types of educational reform:

1. ***Corrective reforms*** that are initiated with immediate reparatory objectives;
2. ***Modernising reforms*** that are interventions aimed at reducing gaps and catching up with Western institutions. They are especially active at the level of curricula, teaching and learning methods, examinations, and school textbooks;
3. ***Structural reforms*** that are targeted at the structures, legal framework and management of educational systems;
4. ***Systemic reforms*** that are deeper and have a global character because they call for a genuine change of paradigm in terms of educational policy. They are aimed not only at the curricula or the legislative framework but also at the very internal logic of education and its relationships with the global social system.

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[12] See annexes.
[13] Higher Education in Europe, Volume 22, No. 3, 1997.

> A systemic reform examines the key elements of every educational policy: the role of the state, relations with the labour market, the financing system, efficiency control, the normative role of national standards, etc.

Birzea goes on to say that with certain exceptions most of the CEECs have not proceeded to systemic reform. Romania is still in the stage of modernisation/ restructuring.

This may be the systemic dilemma of the Phare VET programme that its ambitions outreach the transformation realities of its national context. Undoubtedly, the change of paradigm will not be completely achieved in the four-year period of the Romanian Government Programme (1997-2000). The difficulty is that the institutions and instruments to fulfil the objectives are not yet present in the Romanian institutional framework. They remain to be developed.

Andrei Marga, the Romanian Minister of Education, has formulated[14] the challenge as follows:

"Quick decisions may sometimes lead to messy situations if the decisions in question are not integrated into a coherent approach. Such an approach is only made possible by assumptions regarding what is feasible in a predictable future. In fact, quick decisions make sense; however, they can only motivate people when they are part of a broad concept of change."

The Phare programme (and other programmes) started as quick decisions and were implemented without (much) delay to avoid that the prolonged latency of the system should not evolve into a form of chronic inertia. But as an integral part of the Phare programme we would have expected that the curriculum processes had been accompanied by a broader attempt to formulate a VET policy paper stating the national priorities, the roles, functions and responsibilities of actors and clear policies to reform VET, with the perspective of preparing a new VET Law. A further development of a national policy framework and VET legislation are needed. A national VET strategy which also involves the issue of social partnership is missing. It is, to mention just one example, difficult to give needed support to the Zonal Development Committees without a clearer overall national strategy which "sets the agenda".

Findings:

1. *The decentralised implementation of the programme by involving schools and local social partners apart from the Ministry, is quite unusual for a country with a long tradition of excessive state control. Vocational training is not yet perceived as a high-ranking priority by the social partners. But they are involved in tripartite structures at national, regional and local levels. During the evaluation meetings with members of the National Council for Continuing Training and Education (the "VET Council"), as well as with the Zonal and Local Development Committees, it turned out that there is a need for a more precise orientation, definition of specific roles and clear mandates of the members of these very important consultative bodies. This is a serious threat to the long-term sustainability of the system. Meetings are very much dominated by the state representatives from Ministry, Centre and Inspectorate – and the question was very often, and fully justified, asked: what is our role here? The discourse is too much dominated by educationally internal questions and too little attention is paid to the broader questions of qualifications. The roles and functions of the tripartite structures should be rethought in terms of a more precise formulation of the common dominator: the national VET policy.*

2. *"Generalisation" means that the policy, administration and support structures established to implement the 3-year Phare VET reform programme have now been replaced by the county*

[14] Ministry of National Education, Andrei Marga: The Reform of Education in 1999.

Inspectorate. At the evaluation meeting with representatives from all the 41 counties it turned out that a quite considerable number of counties did not seem to be ready for this task. The impression is that the county level finds it difficult to cope with top-down decisions based on philosophies which apparently have not been thoroughly discussed throughout the country. This also points to the need for an extended policy discussion. A common platform for discussion should be established to avoid the danger of "encapsulation"; of having too few people in too few constituencies who can understand and articulate the highly complex terms and concepts involved in the reforms, let alone drive them to implementation. Hence the need for policy papers to both disseminate and drive policy through the political green and white paper stages.

3. *In all the many meetings we had during the 12 days mission in Romania there was a remarkable self-confidence among the participants. From the Ministry level to the schoolteachers in the province it was argued that due to the Phare programme the VET schools in general are the pedagogical avant-garde and leading the way in the country. This attitude is not just words. Education plays a prominent role in Romania and the teachers are very much respected by all stakeholders. Every year the President opens the new schoolyear by paying a visit to a school to show society's respect for education. Last year was very special. On September the 14th. 1998 the Romanian President Emil Constantinescu – together with Minister of the Interior Gavril Dejeu and Minister of Education Andrei Marga – opened the school year at a Phare VET pilot school, the "Scoala Nationala de Gaz" in Medias. This event had never taken place at a VET school before. The ceremony is regarded as a public approval of the thorough innovation processes which have happened under and in the wake of the Phare programme. It also symbolically marks a renewed interest in VET in the country.*

V.4 The involvement of social partners

Decentralisation, or maybe more precisely deconcentration, has meant more responsibility transferred to the regional level, with increased opportunity for local initiatives. New vocational qualifications developed and accredited by the social partners have changed the shape and functioning of the Romanian VET system. The Phare VET programme has made a major effort to coordinate the input of the social partners at regional level. For the pilot schools the programme has developed an approach to qualifications which enables the Ministry of Education to certify learning attainment and the social partners to identify competencies on the certificate when assessed during work practice.

To run the programme a rather complex administrative framework, including a Steering Committee, a VET Reform Advisory Group, VET Development Committees and a PMU in charge of managing and implementing the programme, has been set up. The stress has been laid on partnership development, thus stimulating the attitude towards the social dialogue and spreading the active participation into the VET reform process. All those interviewed representing social partners and enterprises were quite enthusiastic about the reform experience in which they had been involved. Through the Phare programme training courses have been organised for social partners, needed as there are no traditions for horizontal co-operation. Thus, a lot still needs to be done. The diversity of actors and their partial lack of experience in the VET-related social dialogue have to some extent been overcome during the last years of programme implementation.

A clear success for the programme has been the appointment of Zonal Coordinators to establish and maintain partnership. The programme originally set up managerial structures that allowed the social dialogue to be learned: an Advisory Group at the national level, and 6 Zonal Development Committees at the regional level – with centres in Brasov, Bucharest, Cluj, Craiova, Iasi and Timisoara. In February 1997 a restructuring took place and a Zonal Coordinator (appointed by the PMU) was located in each of the 6 centres. Furthermore, it was decided that Local Development Committees should be started at the county level to get closer to the labour market needs. In fact, institutionalisation of social

partnership under the Phare VET reform programme has taken place at the following levels: national, regional, local (county level) and school (boards). The role of these structures is advisory.

The objectives of the social partnership component have been as follows:

- To initiate and develop the active partnership at national and local level;
- To establish a balance between the educational offer and the labour market demands;
- To establish the optimal relations between the initial VET schools and the actual demands of the enterprises.

Analyses[15] of the dynamics of social partnership established within the Phare VET programme emphasise the evolution within the following areas: the partnership structures, the involved human resources, the group processes, the partnership relations, the accomplished activities and the quality and relevance of the information flow. The tripartite partnership structures created by the Phare VET programme are considered to be a valuable example in themselves, and they constitute a chance for partnership to be maintained in VET.

To sustain the partnership structure after the Phare VET implementation has ended will not be without problems. Although there is a coherent national strategy in the field of social partnership, problems may occur in the implementation phase. The educational system may hinder the evolution of partnership by factors such as: conservative inclinations in the schools and reluctance of several inspectorates to the issue. An analysis in late 1998 emphasises significant improvements in the involvement of the social partners, not least due to the training courses organised for the social partners.

As mentioned above, new legal provisions to maintain the social partnership have been given by the Emergency Ordinance No. 36 of July 1997 (creating the national "VET Council" and the Advisory Board of the county Inspectorates).

The gradual establishment of a national policy framework points to the development of participatory approaches to the VET system involving local authorities, social partners, companies etc. However, the central state authorities retain a predominant role in policy-making, management and financing of the VET system.

Findings:

1. *A more permanent tripartite structure of social partnership in VET has been established in Romania thanks to the Phare VET programme and is now active at the relevant levels of the system. Phare VET has set up the relevant structures which in itself is a difficult process. The geographical/ regional structures have functioned well and the representatives meet regularly. But the procedures and working styles in the committees need an overhaul if the momentum is to be kept. A streamlining of the functioning of the tripartite bodies is necessary to strengthen the activities in the councils, committees and school governing boards. There is at the moment no coordination between the representatives at the national, regional and local levels, no transmission or communication links have yet been established. There is a need to establish a permanent function in the Zonal and Local Development Committees with a responsible person running the day to day business on behalf of the body. There is a need to concentrate only on strategic issues in the national advisory "VET Council" and to professionalize its work: more precise agendas, better prepared meetings, a sharpened description of functions etc. The focus should concentrate on discussing new initiatives instead of listening to ministerial presentations of*

[15] Ministry of National Education: Social Partnership in Vocational Education and Training. Bucharest, 1998.

routine issues.

2. *The Development Committees and the "VET Council" are responsible for putting forward and assessing suggestions for new training programmes. But the procedures for this are still very rudimentary. The cooperation of the social partners must now be developed horizontally. Committees must be set up on sectorial criteria, e.g. within construction, as they would possess the necessary expertise on employment trends in their segment of the labour market, new job profiles emerging, new work process techniques, new work organisation principles applied etc. At the same time they also have an objective interest in not coming up with new specialisations which are not necessary. Developing the branch level social partnership will also support the interlinking of initial VET and continuing training with loops to the labour market needs. The branch committees would mean a qualitative new step in the social dialogue and enable not only reactive but also proactive approaches to the planning of VET.*

3. *A serious risk to be avoided is the prevailing tendency to discuss internal educational matters in these fora. In the meetings observed, the discourse was mainly about schools and the interventions by the civil servants were much too strong. The focus must concentrate on the concept of qualifications and be more open towards different ways besides VET schools to qualify workers. There is a need to reduce the dominance of the representatives of the Ministry of Education, not so much in numbers but particularly in their high profile in setting the agenda and indulging in the plenary discussions. A carefully prepared agenda, which would give more room to the social partners, would be a first step. This point must be underlined. At several evaluation meetings the social partners as well as representatives from the companies articulated frustration about the proceedings taking place. The discussions were said to be of too little relevance to the "external" representatives after the meaningful implementation work related to the Phare VET reform process had ended.*

VI. Challenges and Recommendations for Further Action

We clearly regard the Phare VET Reform Programme in Romania as a success within its terms of reference. The PMU team, assisted by the ETF and the EU Delegation, has managed a large programme in difficult circumstances with considerable success.

In the interview with the Minister of National Education, Mr Andrei Marga, the need to push on the educational reform in the wake of the Phare programme was stressed.

The current priorities of the Ministry of National Education are[16]:

- To continue the structural reforms at all levels of schooling (apprentice centres, technical high schools, adult training centres within the vocational training clusters), in order to reach a comprehensive model of development;
- To finalise the new certification system;
- To strengthen the links between initial and continuing training;
- To monitor the social integration of the graduates within the changing market given that the Phare VET programme itself has lacked a coherent policy towards bringing together initial and further training;
- To introduce curricular changes for the initial training of teachers and to monitor the activities of selected VET trainers;
- To get a clearer picture of "implantation" at all levels (including the classroom); transition is only partial.

The following are the main recommendations for activities which are necessary to "bolt in" the outcomes of the Phare programme:

VI.1 Curricula

Curriculum development is a process of bridge building between the world of work and the world of school. Too little emphasis has been put on the difficult context in which VET curricula must be designed in Romania. The lack of economic restructuring as well as the lack of economic development plans on medium and long term means that the responsiveness of the VET system to the labour market has had to be addressed in a difficult environment. Therefore, the multi-level curriculum (the delay of narrow specialisation), the "tree-like" structure, the horizontal and vertical mobility are fine examples of the flexibility of the supply of qualifications and competencies that will be tendentially valid whatever the demands of the dynamic labour market turn out to be.

However, two central methodological issues need further elaboration: 1) how to analyse the labour process and 2) how to describe the in-company training component. The responsive interrelation between VET schools and local/regional companies is not sufficient, or, necessarily, even in existence and needs to be improved in relation to the local labour market. This requires institutionalisation of the local role of the social partners; review of the legal status of VET schools (governing bodies, school companies, key stakeholders); and local mechanisms for analysing training needs. The framework is in place: the mechanism for linking the labour market with the curriculum is the established interlinkages between the occupational standards, the training standards and the curricula.

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[16] David Parkes (ed): A Cross Country Analysis of Curricular Reform in VET in Central and Eastern Europe. ETF, Dec. 1998

Although the Phare VET programme has covered some ground in this field, there is a lack of focus in the curriculum design process (i.e. on labour process knowledge, on job construction in companies, on job analysis and on how learning takes place on the job.) This is still a great challenge in the structural adaptation of the VET system which is of course also closely related to the transitory situation in the companies.

Pragmatic but in-depth studies of some of the concluded curriculum development projects would be worthwhile and could serve as examples of best practice in how to ensure that the curriculum matches the needs of the occupational sector and on how to work in partnership with a number of private companies to ensure that students get relevant hands-on experience. In Romania the connection between learning and labour is often reduced to not always relevant theory or unreflecting "doing".

A critical revision of the existing curricula from a more global point of view is needed. It would be advisable to concentrate the efforts on developing training standards based on the new emerging job profiles in the agroindustrial, service and communication sectors.

VI.2 Training needs assessments

Strategies should be developed and pilot projects should be promoted to expand the capacity of selected VET schoolteachers and trainers to carry out skill analysis themselves. This should lead to analyses of the needs of local companies and to "translation" of qualification needs into curricula as well as into practical teaching and learning sequences, thereby reducing the gap and the time-lags between the world of labour market analysis and the world of education and training in the schools. In this respect much can be learned from the Phare experience. Romania should capitalise from the fact that the pilot schools have been forced to try to convert new requirements from industry into new training schemes and new forms of instruction. Vocational teacher training is urgently needed given that teachers not only dominate the learning process but are also the designers of new curricula.

VI.3 Widening the school-company network

Between schools and local companies in Romania there often exists a traditional network. This network is based on individual contacts between the directors of schools and state companies. Another type of network exists between teachers and local companies to get jobs for students. These networks require widening towards new small and medium sized companies in a locality. Schools have to change their focus even stronger from the national ministries towards local and regional client groups. To be seen as relevant training partners by the newly established SMEs, the schools have to be highly responsive to the demands of employers and to satisfy their needs in a given region. In the rural areas the local VET school is one of very few public infrastructure units which could have a greater role to play by establishing partnerships with local business especially in regions which are far behind in economic development.

VI.4 Extension of reforms to continuing training - establishing regional training centres

The network of schools should be given more room and incentives to play an active role in the growing adult and continuing training market. This would mean closer contacts with the companies, a sharpening of the capacity to undertake training needs assessments, an increased awareness of the school´s function as a service provider, and it would generate much needed income. The qualification needs of companies require competent workers who are able to combine theory and practice. All over

the world there is a need to strengthen the student´s individual capacity to move between a theoretical-analytical competence and a more experience-based, intuitive competence, depending on context. A good way to try to systematically upgrade this integrated approach is to support VET schools in becoming CVT providers. The continuing training activities offered to experienced workers from local companies would require of the VET teachers to combine theory with the experience and (often tacit) knowledge of their adult course participants.

The pilot and demonstration schools with new equipment, trained teachers and trainers, curriculum development expertise and experience with foreign programmes are in a favourable position to plan an important role as training providers under the EU structural funding measures. They may also develop into nodal points in the efforts to create learning regions in Romania.

VI.5 Teacher training

Much more attention is needed on improving learning environments and the learning process as such. This includes the changing role of teachers as organisers of learning processes as opposed to transmitters of knowledge and skills, as well as a review of the contribution that classroom and work places can make to acquire vocational competencies.

It was remarked by one of the teachers in Medias that "before all was politically driven, now it is totally economically driven. My young colleagues who functioned as curriculum designers have been restricted by this. But of course the new accent is relevant for our students."

There is a risk that the sharp focus on labour market relevance has been at the expense of attention to individual learners. An increased awareness of and capacities for critical reflection on existing and new learning arrangement should be promoted.

There is an urgent need not only for an overall reform of pre-service teacher training but also for an intensive further education of teachers. Teachers should not only have academic studies and work experience but must be able to convert this experience into their teaching concepts. Teachers and foremen should understand the organisation of workshops and be familiar with the labour environment and its future development in companies. In Romania, VET teacher and trainer training is delivered by the universities and other higher education establishments and is based on a curriculum which is not sufficiently geared towards their future professional lives as teachers. Basic and further training of teachers and trainers should be geared more towards cooperation with local companies, on needs from the modern labour process and the practice of modern learning processes. Teachers in most cases have had some introductory courses in new methods to help organise the teaching process. Consultancy help is still required for teachers and learners to design their co-operative new VET processes.

VI.6 School Manager training

The small component contained in the Phare programme focussed on strategic management, funding and school budgeting, personnel management, the management of change, networking (local, national and transnational) and marketing. School managers are heads of pedagogical institutions and they need not only to be trained in how to manage business but also in how to manage people. Sustainability of the reform will require incentives, coaching and strong involvement of school leaders on the content side of VET programmes in the coming years. The curriculum reform process will be an ongoing and a really never-ending process. It would be advisable to provide programmes for school managers and county inspectorate representatives in innovative pedagogical leadership so that school managers might upgrade their pedagogical leadership function. This is an important function. The curricular reforms are so radical that visible leadership is needed.

VI.7 The Challenges of "Generalisation"

Although the Phare VET reform methodologies in principle have been taken from the experimental to the systemic level by the political decision to generalise the new principles. it is very difficult to see how this is to be achieved without a considerable amount of money being allocated for this purpose. The challenge concerns equipment and training of teachers and school managers, in short, material as well as human resources. The change agents appointed are the country inspectorates who do not have the resources for this task. Some of those who were directly involved in creating and implementing the project are now no longer holding the same positions, but teacher trainers will play a crucial role in training the staff of the remaining 90% of VET schools. The necessary critical mass of change agents may be in place to consolidate what has been achieved but it cannot function without money.

Foreign donors should immediately be asked to supply extra funding for this generalisation process, the scale of which is very big. The schools will not be able to undertake this assignment solely by being given the right to spend extra-budgetary earnings.

VI.8 Policy and Strategy

The important decentralisation initiatives already taken[17] reflect the wish to enable the flexible provision of training for the market where needed. However, the measures introduced until now have been part solutions. There is a need for a comprehensive review of the progress made so far and a more overall planning of development in a number of areas, which are still not consistent with the overall policy.

The production of a policy white paper would give systemic weight to the development points at policy level. Such papers typically have future indications for legislation, resourcing, location of decision making, teacher training, institution building both on the supply and the demand side, and would consolidate labour market mechanisms and of course research and curriculum development capacity. Furthermore, it will be important to integrate the VET concept paper within an overall education policy paper that addresses the lifelong learning debate. Mechanisms for continuity and sustainability should include the development of administrative procedures and structures to take innovative ideas forward in a routine way.

VI.9 Social partnership

A very important achievement of the Phare programme has been the decentralisation of planning and the active involvement of social partners at different levels of the system. It is very important to sustain this tripartite structure to keep the VET system in a permanent contact with the world of work. Institutions have already been established and approved by the Ministry of National Education. But more is needed.

On the central level it is needed to strengthen the National VET Council by clarifying its vision and mission and by making it more operational. The target must be set on discussion of strategic issues.

At the central level it is recommendable to widen the tripartite structure horizontally by starting to set up sectorial branch committees, e.g. in construction, representing the different segments of the labour market. This is needed to get more precise information when discussing the establishment of new VET courses.

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[17] See Annexes

At the regional, zonal level, which in Romania is very important for VET planning, it is necessary to specify the tasks of these until now very well functioning development units. Some food for thoughts might well be found in the TECs in the UK.

At the local level the now institutionalised advisory role of the social partners in the county Inspectorates will also have to be overhauled. There is a need to define in a more precise way the tasks, roles and responsibilities, and it appears necessary to set up secretarial structures in these bodies.

At the school level the social partners have had a place on the school governing boards and in examination commissions in the Phare VET pilot schools; this representation should be generalised to all VET schools. On an experimental basis it might be a good idea to test whether advisory "local education committees" could help schools to plan and execute their teaching in a closer interplay with work place based training sequences.

VI.10 Institutional development

During the last 1,5 years institutional development in the VET sector has been significant and born by visionary management. In this area, too, the time has perhaps come to review the overall institutional structure which has now been developed with a view to trimming and co-ordinating the roles and functions of each of the institutions and the distributions of roles and responsibilities between them, including the lines of communication. There are a few reasons why this would be advisable.

First of all, the Phare VET programme was able to support the institutional development only to a limited extent, ending before the new institutional structure was fully developed. The current institutional structure is not entirely consistent and efficient enough in its interaction.

Secondly, the pre-accession perspective of Romania urges the strengthening of this network of institutions at national and regional/local level so that the VET system will be sufficiently prepared to make full use of the structural funding opportunities, which will be made available beginning from 2000.

In this context the most important institutions are: the MoNE and the MoLSP, the NCDVET, the National Council for Initial and Continuing Education, the Local Development Committees , the National Agency for Employment and VET and the National Agency for Regional Development and their local branches.

At the local level the end of the Phare programme, which set the agenda for the local and zonal committees in the first few years of their lives, created a difficult situation in some regions, a kind of vacuum, in which it would be important to provide support for the development of their role on the new conditions created by e.g. the structural funds.

VI.11 The continuation of funded support

The last conclusion and recommendation of this report is focused on the issue of continued support for the Romanian VET reform. In general, the fact that it was not agreed to finance an extension of the Phare VET reform programme is incomprehensible to the evaluators. In view of the decision and ongoing preparations to generalise the Phare curricula to include more than 100.000 students already from September of this year amounting to a minimum of 300.000 in 2001, with all the attached urgent needs already discussed extensively above and in view of the very difficult economic situation of the country, it seems that the decision not to grant an extension was taken at a very decisive point in the Romanian VET reform - at the time of nation-wide dissemination of the highly progressive and modern Phare curricula to more than 700 schools.

There could not have been a question of the absorption capacity of the Ministry of National Education and the other key stake holders in VET, since the development over the past few years demonstrates that the high commitment and managerial competencies needed for the efficient use of an extension would have been there on a national as well as regional and local level.

The situation is perhaps characteristic of the Phare programme in respect of two issues. One is the fact that Phare support for the VET reforms is not consistent from one CEEC country to the other. One country will receive support for the natural extension of its first VET programme - for the support of the development of a life -long learning system, another country will not.

And this is perhaps again related to the issue of pre-accession: Education is underlying the principle of subsidiarity and it has therefore only a limited acquis communautaire - technically speaking. The question is, however, if this bureaucratic point of view should guide the allocation of resources to the area of human resources development - in particular VET, which is so intimately linked with the national economies and societal systems of a number of applicant states. The CEECs are fundamentally different from the countries which were recently included in the EU: Austria, Finland and Sweden, in that they were all socialist societies however different between themselves.

It is for this reason that continued support of national efforts to develop a market-oriented VET system in the opinion of the evaluators equals support of the overall pre-accession. The effort needed to do this is very often underestimated by agents not familiar with the complexity of VET.

Key agents in Romania are aware of the necessity to rebuild the country with the help of education. It can only be recommended that more EU support be attached to those environments, which have the necessary absorption capacity. The VET sector is definitely one of them.

List of Annexes

1) Terms of Reference for the Final Evaluation
2) Structure chart: Organisation of the Phare VET Programme
3) Structure chart: MoNE
4) Notification concerning the domain of competencies and tasks specific to the directorates within the General Directorate of Human Resources
5) The National Centre for Development of Vocational and Technical Education - Description of Competencies and Tasks
6) The Certification system and organisation methodology concerning the graduation exam in VET schools within the Phare VET Ro 9405 Programme
7) Regulation concerning the organisation and functioning of the national council for continuous training and education. References to vocational training.
8) Functioning regulation of the local committee for the development of social and economic partnership for VET.
9) Disposition concerning the decentralisation of pre-university education and consolidation of institutional autonomy in schools and high-schools (No. 3513 of March 30, 1999)
10) Methodology concerning the organisation of the exam for the occupation of vacant didactic positions (April 4th 1999)
11) Specifications concerning the selection of the representative education institutions (April 6th, 1999)
12) Disposition concerning the establishment of the representative education institutions for 1998-1999 (May 11th 1999)

Selection of persons met during the missions May-June 1999:

Ministry of National Education:

Marga, Andrei	Minister of Education.
Fronescu, Mircea Corneliu	Secretary of State
Gliga, Lucia	Director of Department of Personnel, School Network and Management.
Gorun, Constantin	VET Inspector
Ionescu, Dan Paul	VET Inspector
Iliescu Victor	Higher Education Inspector (former PMU Curriculum expert)
Mirescu, Silviu Christian	Director of the Department for VET
Serban, Madlen	Head of Department of Human Resources Development.

National Centre for Development of VET:

Serban, Madlen	Director
Pop Romulus	Implementation assistant
Posea, Paula	Curriculum expert
Radu, Gabriel,	VET expert for Social Partnership in Brasov region
Botez, Virgil	VET expert for Social Partnership in Iasi region
Predoaica, Daniel	VET expert for Social Partnership in Dolj region
Scriosteanu, Catinca	Curriculum expert
Vladut, Zoica	Curriculum expert, deputy director
Ciolan, Lucian	Curriculum expert

Support staff:

Andras, Zoltan	Translator (not from the centre)
Ursan, Raluca	Secretary
Preda, Cosmina	Translator
Tudorache, Viorel	Driver

Management, staff, students and local social partners of the following schools visited:

1) School Group of Food Industry "Dumitru Motoc"	Bucharest
2) Higher Commercial School "Nicolae Kretzulescu"	Bucharest
3) School Group of Post and Telecommunication	Bucharest
4) School Group of Polygraphy and Cinematography	Bucharest
5) School Group of Economy, Administration and Service	Targoviste
6) Industrial School Group Tractorul II	Brasov
7) School Group of Food Industry "Elena Doamna"	Galati
8) Agricultural School Group Pallas	Constanta
9) School Group of Economy, Administration and Services	Constanta
10) School Group of Economy, Administration and Services	Calimanesti
11) School Group of Food Industry	Sibiu
12) School Group of Industrial Gas Metan	Medias
13) Industrial School Group 1. May	Ploiesti
14) School Group of Industrial Chemistry	Ploiesti

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Members of the following Local VET Development and Zonal Development Committees:

1) Valcea
2) Sibiu
3) Brasov
4) Bucuresti
5) Constanta
6) Craiova
7) Galati
8) Ploiesti
9) Targoviste

Representatives of all Inspectorates of Romania

National Council for Education and Continuing Education

National Observatory:

Birzea, Cesar, Ph.D. Director.

Institute of Educational Sciences:

Badescu, Mircea, Senior researcher
Ciolan, Lucian, Researcher
Radulescu, Eleonora, Researcher
Vaideanu, Dan, Researcher
Voicu, Liliana, Researcher

Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Romania:

Zarojanu, Felicia

National Agency for Employment and Training:

Platon, Gabriela

Romanian Free Trade Union of Teachers:

Narosi, Ioan-Leon

City Hall of Bucharest:

Diaconescu, Florin

EU Delegation in Romania:

Dobrescu, Septimia	Social Task Manager.
Mordue, Simon	Head of Phare Department.

ETF:

Corradini, Milena	programme manager
Rogojinaru, Adela	VET expert.

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LIST OF PILOT AND DEMONSTRATION SCHOOLS

MECHANICS AND MATERIALS TECHNOLOGY

1.	Machine Building Industrial School Cluster no. 3	Craiova, 115, Brazda lui Novac Street Phone: 051-423 902
2.	"Traian" Machine Building Industrial School Cluster no. 1	Galati, 203, Traian Street Phone: 036-426 922
3.	"Henri Coanda" Machine Building Industrial School Cluster	Pitesti, 15, Fundatura Teilor Street Phone: 048-221 647
4.	"Tractorul II" Industrial School Cluster	Brasov, 12, Fundatura Harmanului Street Phone: 068-136 284
5.	Machine Building Industrial School Cluster C.U.G.	Cluj-Napoca, 199-201, Muncii Blvd. Phone: 064-415 119
6.	Machine Building Industrial School Cluster	Cugir, 9, Victoriei Street Phone: 058-751 524
7.	"Progresul" Machine Building Industrial School Cluster	Braila, 346, Calea Galati Street Phone: 039-645 636
8.	"1 Mai" Industrial School Cluster	Ploiesti, 14, Petrolului Blvd. Phone: 044-173 792
9.	Machine Building Industrial School Cluster	Resita, 1, Traian Vuia Square Phone: 055-212 461
10.	"Unio" Machine Building Industrial School Cluster	Satu-Mare, 1, Mihai Eminescu Street Phone: 061-736 766

ELECTROTECHNICS AND ENERGETICS

1.	Energetics Industrial School Cluster	Craiova, 3-95, Amaradiei Street Phone: 051-196 059
2.	Energetics Industrial School Cluster	Bucharest, 5, Aleea Podul Giurgiului,Sector 5 Phone: 01-685 6630
3.	"Electromotor " Industrial School Cluster	Timisoara, 3, Huniade Square Phone: 056-193 854
4.	"Electroputere" Industrial School Cluster	Craiova, 13, Electroputere Street Phone: 051-143 645

ELECTRONICS, AUTOMATICS AND INDUSTRIAL INFORMATICS

1.	Post and Telecommunications School Cluster	Bucharest, 1, Romancierilor Street, Sector 6 Phone: 01-413 4645
2.	"Tehnoton" Industrial School Cluster	Iasi, 43, Mihai Sturza Street Phone: 032-132 843
3.	"Electronica" Industrial School Cluster	Bucharest, 3-5, Dimitrie Pompei Blvd., Sector 2 Phone: 01-242 5260
4.	Post and Telecommunications School Cluster	Cluj, 78-80, Motilor Street Phone: 064-194 995
5.	"Electrocontact" School Cluster	Botosani, 7, Prieteniei Street Phone: 031-840 006
6.	"Domnul Tudor" School Cluster	Drobeta Turnu-Severin, 7, I.C.Bratianu Street Phone: 052-313 745

EXTRACTION AND PROCESSING OF MINERALS

1.	Mining School Cluster	Petrosani, 10, 22 Decembrie Street Phone: 054-542 482
2.	Mining School Cluster	Baia Mare, 64, Victor Babes Street Phone: 062-424 868
3.	Mining School Cluster	Motru, 1, Molidului Street Phone: 053-360 712
4.	Metallurgy Industrial School Cluster	Hunedoara, 17, Victoriei Street Phone: 054-711 687
5.	Metallurgy Industrial School Cluster	Galati, 23, 1 Decembrie 1918 Street Phone: 036-426 121

EXTRACTION AND PROCESSING OF OIL AND GAS

1.	Oil Industrial School Cluster	Câmpina, 91, Grivitei Street Phone: 044-337 681
2.	Oil Industrial School Cluster	Moinesti, 2, George Enescu Street Phone: 034-362 413
3.	Pit Gas Industrial School Cluster	Medias, 1, Metanului Street Phone: 069-815 876

INDUSTRIAL CHEMISTRY

1.	Industrial Chemistry School Cluster	Iasi, 61 A, Socola Street Phone: 032-137 832
2.	Industrial Chemistry School Cluster	Pitesti, 23, Petrochimistilor Blvd. Phone: 048-218 699
3.	Industrial Chemistry School Cluster	Ploiesti, 14, Petrolului Blvd. Phone: 044-173 182

BUILDINGS AND PUBLIC WORKS

1.	"Traian Vuia" Industrial School Cluster	Cluj, 128-130, 21 Decembrie 1989 Street Phone: 064-430 942
2.	"Anghel Saligny" Industrial School Cluster	Bucharest, 12, N. Grigorescu Blvd., Sector 3 Phone: 01-6431475
3.	"Anghel Saligny" Fitting Engineering School Cluster	Iasi, 14, Bucium Street Phone: 032-133 397
4.	Fitting Engineering School Cluster No. 1	Pitesti, 35B, Razboieni Street Phone: 048- 642 147
5.	"Perspektiva" Fitting Engineering School Cluter	Covasna, 13, Libertatii Square Phone: 067-351 736

AGRICULTURE

1.	Pallas Agricultural School Cluster– Zootechnics	Constanta, 248, Bratianu Blvd. Phone: 041-620 741
2.	Agricultural School Cluster	Tulcea, 104, Isaccei Street Phone: 040-550 337
3.	Agricultural School Cluster	Armasesti, 162, Armasesti Village Phone: 043-251 356
4.	Agricultural School Cluster	Simleul Silvaniei, 11, Simion Barnutiu Street Phone: 060-674 718
5.	"H. Vasiliu" Agricultural School Cluster	Podul Iloaiei, Podul Iloaiei Village Phone: 032-740 221
6.	Agricultural School Cluster	Alexandria, 69, Libertatii Street Phone: 047-312 758
7.	Agricultural School Cluster	Falticeni, 10, Maior Ioan Street Phone: 030-443 491

8.	Agricultural School Cluster	Slatina, 150, Striharet Street 049-421 295
9.	Agricultural School Cluster	Husi, 17, M. Kogalniceanu Street Phone: 035-471 037
10.	Agricultural School Cluster	Odorheiu Secuiesc, 12, Tompa Laszlo Street Phone: 066-211 473
11.	Agricultural School Cluster	Timisoara, 56, Calea Aradului Phone: 056-144 266
12.	Agricultural School Cluster	Calarasi, 2, Prelungirea Bucuresti Street Phone: 042-321 812

FOOD INDUSTRY

1.	"Dumitru Motoc" Food Industry School Cluster	Bucharest, 16, Spataru Preda Street, Sector 5 Phone: 01-4233572
2.	Food Industry School Cluster	Sibiu, 18, Postavarilor Street Phone: 069-221 323
3.	Food Industry School Cluster No. 1	Galati, 109, Domneasca Street Phone: 036-465 551

PROCESSING OF WOOD PRODUCTS

1.	Forest School Cluster	Târgu Mures, 62, Gh. Marinescu Street Phone: 065-215 011
2.	Forest School Cluster	Piatra Neamt, 67, Stefan cel Mare Street Phone: 033-213 680
3.	"Constantin Brâncusi " Forest School Cluster	Bucharest, 1, Dimitrie Pompei Blvd., Sector 2 Phone: 01-232 1275
4.	"Ioan Ciordas" Forest School Cluster	Beius, 5, Ioan Ciordas Street Phone: 059-212 062

LIGHT INDUSTRY

1.	"Victoria" Light Industry School Cluster	Iasi, 51-53, Socola Street Phone: 032-137 404
2.	Light Industry School Cluster	Focsani, 9, Moldova Street Phone: 037-613 914
3.	"Nichita Stanescu" Light Industry School Cluster	Bucharest, 3, Lucretiu Patrascanu Str., Sector 3 Phone: 01-643 2430
4.	Light Industry School Cluster	Cluj, 3, Taberei Street Phone: 064-162 588

TRANSPORTS

1.	Transports - Railways Industrial School Cluster	Brasov, 12, Fundatura Harmanului Street Phone: 068-136 284
2.	Marine Industrial School Cluster	Giurgiu, 30B, Uzinei Street Phone: 046-212 383
3	Road Transport Industrial School Cluster	Timisoara, 1, Ardealului Street Phone: 056-221 672

AUDIO-VISUL TECHNICS AND COMMUNICATION

1.	Polygraphics and Cinematography School Cluster	Bucharest, 163, Jiului Street, Sector 1 Phone: 01-667 4160

FORESTRY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

1.	Forestry School Cluster	Nasaud, 1, Garii Street Phone: 063-364 977
2.	Water Resources Management School Cluster	Arad, 8, Nicolae Grigorescu Street Phone: 057- 223648

COMMERCE AND BUSINESS SERVICES

1.	"Gheorghe Chitu"Commercial School Cluster	Craiova, 12, Brestei Street Phone: 051-412 943
2.	Economic - Administrative School Cluster	Târgoviste, 5, Nicolae Balcescu Blvd. Phone: 045-620484

PUBLIC CATERING SERVICES

1.	Economic, Administrative and Services School Cluster	Constanta, 15, Decebal Street Phone: 041-617 119
2.	Economic and Administrative School Cluster	Bucharest, 38, Viilor Road, Sector 5 Phone: 01-335 2830

FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

1.	"Nicolae Kretulescu" Commercial High - School	Bucharest, 17, Hristo Botev Street, Sector 2 Phone: 01-613 9082
2.	Economic, Administrative and Services School Cluster	Buzau, 15, Tudor Vladimirescu Street Phone: 038-436 240

TOURISM AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

1.	Economic, Administrative and Services School Cluster	Calimanesti, 286, Calea lui Traian Phone: 050-750 182

SERVICES AND ALLIED ARTS

1.	"UCECOM" School Cluster	Bucharest, 29, Econom Cezarescu Str., Sector 6 Phone: 01-638 4215

HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELFARE

1.	"Dr. Victor Babes" School Cluster	Bucharest, 254, Fundeni Road, Sector2 Phone: 01-240 5135

ANNEX 1

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Programme Title and Number: **Phare VET Reform Programme in Romania (RO 9405)**

Project Title: **Final Evaluation of the Phare VET Reform Programme in Romania**

I. BACKGROUND

1. The European Training Foundation (ETF) has been established by a decision of the European Union Council of Ministers in May 1990 in order to contribute to the human resource development of the emerging democracies in central and Eastern Europe. In July 1994, the Council of Ministers extended the Foundation's mandate to include the former USSR and Mongolia. The ETF began its work in January 1995 as an agency of the European Union (EU).

2. In March 1995, the Foundation started its activities in the field of VET in the countries of central and Eastern Europe by taking over the management of several Phare reform programmes. One of these programmes is the 1994 Phare VET Reform Programme in Estonia.

3. **PROGRAMME IDENTIFICATION:**

Programme number	RO 9405
Financing Memorandum signed on:	13/03/1995
Duration of programme:	3 years
Total budget:	25 MECU
Responsible ministry:	Ministry of National Education
End of programme:	December 1998

4. **OBJECTIVE OF THE PHARE VET REFORM PROGRAMME & DESCRIPTION OF KEY ACTIONS:**
Modernising secondary vocational education in Romania by (i) developing curricula for trades concerning 20 different occupational families; (ii) training teachers and school managers; (iii) establishing links with EU partner schools; (iv) upgrading learning equipment; (v) designing a national VET policy paper and disseminating results from pilot school projects on a nation-wide scale.

5. Programme actions included:
   - training Ministry of Education inspectorates and "cluster development committee" staff in methodologies of curriculum development, assessment and standards, VET finance and administration and in management of change;
   - developing international links for the pilot and demonstration schools with EU VET institutions; determining new curriculum principles and policy for teacher training. These will be tested during the programme and integrated into national curricula;
   - monitoring the programmes in the pilot and demonstration schools, including an evaluation of their suitability within the overall national VET strategy;
   - assisting in the review and development of VET policy and ensuring that human resources development is given a high priority at government level;
   - disseminating results nationally and internationally by means of seminars.

   The programme has been implemented in 25 Pilot schools and 50 demonstration schools. These schools cover 20 different sectors and they are located in the following clusters: Iasi, Bucharest, Brasov, Timisoara, Cluj, Craiova.
   The Phare Programme has reorganised the previous of more than 130 narrow skills in 193 trades and 63 related specialisation, which refer to the following sectors:
   1. Mechanics and materials technology
   2. Electromechanics and energetics
   3. Electronics, automation, industrial information technology
   4. Extraction and processing of minerals
   5. Extraction and processing of natural gas and crude oil
   6. Industrial chemistry
   7. Construction and public work

8. Agriculture
9. Food processing
10. Sale and processing of wood products
11. Light industry
12. Transports
13. Audio-visual techniques
14. Forestry and environmental protection
15. Commerce and business services
16. Financial administration
17. Public catering services
18. Tourism and hotel related activities
19. Services and allied arts
20. Health and social welfare

A Programme Management Unit (PMU), based in Bucharest, was established by the Ministry of Education and managed the programme until 31st December 1998. Starting from 1st January's 1999 all the PMU's activities have been taken over by the National Centre for the Development of Vocational Education and Training (NCDVET). The NCDVET is composed of local staff and is under the Ministry of National Education. A VET Reform Advisory Group was also set up to provide strategic guidance to the programme with the participation of national representatives from employers and trade union organisation and one expert from each curriculum development group. This Advisory Group has now become a National Council for Initial and Continuing Education.

A VET Cluster development committee was also established in each of the above mentioned 6 localities. These Committees were made up of representatives of the social partners, schools staff, local public administration, university professors etc. and they acted under the co-ordination of a representative of the PMU operating in the cluster.

A mid-term evaluation, focusing in particular on curricular reforms undertaken and related issues, was carried out in June 1997. The evaluation report will be made available to the Contractor and the results shall be taken into consideration so as to avoid duplication.

II. OBJECTIVE OF THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CONTRACT

The objective of this contract is to provide the Romanian Ministry of National Education, and in particular the NCDVET, the EC Delegation and the European Training Foundation with an independent assessment of the achievements of the Phare VET Reform Programme. It shall in particular assess the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of the VET reform strategy and activities in the context of adapting Romania's VET system to the requirements of the market economy and the democratic society and support Romania's efforts to prepare for accession to the European Union. With a view to support the follow-up strategic development for the sector, the contract shall come up with recommendations as to further actions to be implemented.

III. TASKS OF THE CONTRACTOR

The Contractor shall carry out a review of the Phare VET Reform Programme and draw up an evaluation report on his findings.

The evaluation shall

- provide a systematic assessment of on-going or completed projects;
- review the design, implementation and results of programme activities;
- assess whether programme objectives were relevant and whether they have been fulfilled;
- look at the efficiency & effectiveness of programme implementation;
- assess the impact and sustainability of programme results and
- come up with follow-up recommendation.

The evaluation report shall review the individual programme components with a particular view to the following points:

- evaluation of the curriculum development approach applied, labour market relevance of the curricula developed and how the new curricula are being implemented with a special view to learning methodologies applied, qualifications of teaching staff, involvement of social partners in various ways, etc.; this could be done by analyzing one curriculum in a particular field in a particular field in greater detail;

- assessment of the school managers', curriculum development officers' and teacher training programmes with a particular view to course contents and training methodologies applied and the competencies developed by those who underwent the training;
- effectiveness of the equipment procured under the programme;
- usefulness and sustainability of the partnership arrangements with EU institutions and
- effectiveness of measures to spread results to non-pilot schools.

Apart from that, the evaluation report shall address the following issues:

- impact of the programme on overall VET reform processes, including progress made with respect to
- the strengthening of administrative capacities at national/ regional/ local levels;
- the design of a policy and legal framework;
- the involvement of social partners;
- the definition of roles and functions of VET support bodies and institutions, as well as
- the review of mechanisms to both finance, manage, monitor and evaluate the system
- resulting challenges and recommendations for further actions, with a special view to the further maximisation of resources and the extension of reforms to the continuing vocational training area.

A 2-3 page Executive Summary, outlining major findings and recommendations of the report, shall precede the report.
The draft of the evaluation report should be submitted to the NCDVET, the EC Delegation and the ETF by the 07/o6/99. The Contractor will then submit comments by the 27/06/99.

The final version of the report will be made available in English and Romanian.

IV. INPUTS REQUIRED

For the performance of the tasks, the Contractor shall provide two experts who shall spend **up to 20 working days in Romania.**
The Consultants should include in their submissions proposals to hold a 1-2 day **programme review conference**, to be organized during the evaluation in the country, to involve the participation of all the main programme actors and pilot school representatives, in order to fully evaluate the impact of the programme and to make recommendations for the future development of VET policy in Romania.
The programme review conference could be used to assess the possible role of the pilot schools as regional training centres (potential linkage with future ESF funding) and the review the general development of human resources at the regional level in Romania (ministerial and regional officials, pilot schools and social partners could be invited). All the organizational aspects of the conference, including list of participants, agenda, location, etc. will be agreed between the Consultant and the NCDVET, immediately after the award of this contract.
The Consultant shall arrange, with the facilitation of the NCDVET, for meetings with relevant people and institutions, including representatives from the Ministry of National Education, the Steering Committee, representatives from social partner organizations, school managers and/or curriculum development officers and other persons involved in programme implementation.
During the Contractor's mission to Romania, the NCDVET will provide office facilities and ensure access to all relevant materials and documents the consultant may require.

The mission to Romania of the experts proposed by the Contractor should take place during the period 9-22/05/1999. Not less than 10 schools (Pilot + demonstration) should be visited.

Many studies and reports have been produced during the implementation of the programme, the Contractor will therefore analyze all these documents.

The NCDVET will assist the Contractor in the arrangement of meetings with relevant people and institutions and will ensure to all relevant materials and documents.

V. BUDGET

A maximum budget of **EURO 49,000** is available for the purpose of this evaluation.

VI. REPORTING

The Contractor shall send one copy of the evaluation report to:

Ms Milena Corradini
European Training Foundation
Viale Settimio Severo 65
I – 10133 Torino, Italy
Tel: +39 011 6302375
Fax: +39 011 6302200
e-mail: mco@etf.eu.int

Ms Madlen Serban
National Centre for the Development of Vocational Education and Training
28-30 Berthelot St., Bucharest
Tel: +40 1 3111162
Fax: +40 1 3124002
e-mail: madlen@phare-vet.kappa.ro

Mr. Simon Mordue
EC Delegation
11 Grigore Mora St.
Bucharest
Tel: +40 1 2303636
Fax: +40 1 2302453

VII. PROFESSIONAL PROFILE REQUIRED

CV(s) should be attached to the proposal.

The expert(s) should ideally

- have experience in the implementation and/or evaluation of Phare programmes in the field of VET;
- have good knowledge of VET reforms in Central and East European countries;
- have experience in VET policies and institutional issues;
- have experience in curriculum development and assessment;
- have good communicational and interpersonal skills and
- have good English writing skills.

NB: Please note that none of the Contractor's experts shall have been directly involved in programme implementation.

VIII. DOCUMENTS TO BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE CONTRACTOR

- Financing Memorandum of the Phare VET Reform Programme in Romania (RO 9405)
- Updated Strategic Plan and Work Programme
- "Cross-country Analysis of Curriculum Reforms in Phare Countries"

HERE ANNEX 2
ORGANICHART OF THE PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT UNIT
OF THE VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION REFORM PROGRAMME
EU – Phare VET RO 9405

HERE – ANNEX 3 (ORGANICHART OF MoNE)

ANNEX 4

ROMANIA
MINISTRY OF NATIONAL EDUCATION
GENERAL DIRECTORATE FOR HUMAN RESOURCES
Bucharest, 28-30, G-ral Berthelot Street,
Phone: 00 401 311 1162, Fax: 00 401 312 4002

Bucharest, 29075/ March 17, 1999

NOTIFICATION

concerning the domain of competencies and tasks specific to the directorates within the general directorate of human resources

Taking into consideration the provisions in the Law on Education no. 84/1995, modified and supplemented by the Emergency Ordinance of the Government of Romania no. 36/1997,
Taking into consideration the provisions in the Law no.128/1997 concerning the Teachers' Statute,
Taking into consideration the legislative and normative provisions concerning the employment, evaluation and further training of non-didactic staff,
Taking into consideration the provisions in the Government Decision no. 101/1999 concerning the re-organization of the Ministry of National Education and of the Disposition of the Minister of National Education no. 3370/March 2, 1999, as well as the specifications in the notification of the general directorate of human resources concerning the organization of this one,
The domains of major competencies and tasks of the directorates within the general directorate of human resources are the following:

Total no. of positions (management)	Denomination of the General Directorate	
23 (5)	**General Directorate for Human Resources**	
1 (1)	**General Director Human Resources**	Development policies of human resources with managerial, teaching and execution tasks in pre-university education Development policies of initial vocational training and professional insertion Development policies of continuous education Monitoring the school network with a view to ensuring educational management, both from the point of view of the management process as well as the efficient administration of human resources within the system Planning the educational offer in conformity with the concerns of the students and local community, as well as with the needs of the social and economic strategical development, at regional and national level; Optimization of pre-university school network
1 (-)	**Secretary**	Activities specific to the general directorate and subordinate directorates
13 (2)	**Personnel, Network, Management Directorate**	
1 (1)	**Director**	Policies related to institutional managerial and human resources development specific to pre-university education
6 (1)	***Management, Personnel Department***	
1 (1)	***Chief of Department***	Educational management policies in the field of human resources specific to pre-university education; Information, information monitoring and administration of the school network from the point of view of the issues specific to the competency domain of the compartment meant to ensure the quality of educational management in pre-university education;
1 (-)		Recruitment, employment and continuous training of managers (school inspectors, directors)
1 (-)		Organization of institutional evaluation (school inspectorates, houses of the teaching staff, education institutions)
1 (-)		Recruitment and employment policies for the didactic staff and the personnel in institutions subordinated to the ministry, carrying out the activity in the field of pre-university education; Administration and monitoring of related activities

1 (-)		Recruitment and employment of the auxiliary didactic and non-didactic staff; Administration and monitoring of related activities
1 (-)		Monitoring the school network and ensuring the quality of the educational system from the point of view of institutional and human resources development
4 (-)	***School Network Department***	
1 (-)		Statistics and predictive administration concerning the planning of educational offer within the compulsory pre-school education
1 (-)		Statistics and predictive administration concerning the planning of educational offer within the compulsory post- education (high secondary)
1 (-)		Statistics and predictive administration concerning the development of post high-school education; monitoring pre-university education network (school inspectorates and education institutions), and correlation of indices specific to each school level and type specific to the development of predictive administration of pre-university education.
1 (-)		Statistics and predictions related to the education institution network in relation with the risk groups (minorities, disabled, girls/boys), monitoring the school drop and other indices specific to the instruction process; school documents
3 (-)	**Department in charge with the continuous training of didactic and non-didactic staff**	
1 (-)		Continuous training policies concerning the didactic, auxiliary didactic and non-didactic staff through specific methods; Cooperation with institutions organizing this training aimed at ensuring the relevancy of training for the final goals specific to pre-university education
1 (-)		Analysis of training needs specific to auxiliary and non-didactic staff; Monitoring the school network
1 (-)		Analysis of the continuous training needs specific to the didactic staff; Monitoring the school network
4 (1)	**Directorate of continuous training and professional insertion**	
1 (1)	**Director**	Implementation policies concerning the principle of continuous education through the school institutions; Monitoring the suppliers of continuous education programmes; Professional insertion policies and monitoring their administration
1 (-)		Continuous vocational training through the education institutions; relation with other suppliers of continuous vocational training according to the tasks of the Ministry of National Education concerning the approval of their functioning and certification
1 (-)		Professional insertion policies concerning the graduates of pre-university education and monitoring the related activities
1 (-)		Continuous education provided through education institutions; the relation with other suppliers of continuous education programmes according to the tasks of the Ministry of National Education
3 (1)	**Directorate of vocational training**	
1 (1)	**Director**	Policies related to the development of vocational education within the initial training sub-system; Management of development programmes for vocational education through partnership with other countries or within certain programmes of the European Community; Information, information monitoring and administration of the school network with a view to ensuring the quality of vocational education
1 (-)		Classified list of trades/social partnership/planning of training needs/school guidance and counseling/entrance to and graduation from vocational schools
1 (-)		Classified list of trades/social partnership/planning of training needs/school guidance and counseling/entrance to and graduation from apprenticeship schools/organization of contests for trades and technological specialties; correlation of vocational education with the high-school education and pre-vocational training.

Director General
Madlen Serban

GOVERNMENT OF ROMANIA

DECISION
Concerning the Creation of the National Centre for the Development of Vocational and Technical Education

According to the provisions in Article 116, paragraph (2), in the Constitution of Romania:
the **Government of Romania** decides:

Article 1

The creation of the National Centre for the Development of Vocational and Technical Education is approved through this decision, as a public institution, with legal personality, specialized in vocational and technical education, under the supervision of the Ministry of National Education, with the following headquarters: 28-30, General Berthelot Street, sector 1, Bucharest.

Article 2

The National Centre for the Development of Vocational and Technical Education is meant to carry on the reform of the vocational and technical education, started with the support of the European Union, through the Phare VET RO 9405 Programme.

Article 3

The National Centre for the Development of Vocational and Technical Education shall have the following major tasks:

a) to ensure the scientific coordination and develop the methodology concerning the design, development, implementation and revision of the curriculum for vocational and technical education;
b) to ensure the scientific coordination and develop the methodologies concerning the design of the evaluation and certification system of vocational training specific to vocational and technical education;
c) to ensure the scientific coordination and develop the methodologies concerning the training of the didactic staff of the vocational and technical education;
d) to provide professional coordination and scientific consultancy to the group of authors, national, regional and local trainers within the network of vocational and technical education;
e) to ensure the correlation, as far as principles and methodologies are concerned, of initial and continuing training specific to the teachers of vocational and technical education;
f) to cooperate with institutions, programmes and projects in the field, with a view to correlating the design and development of the vocational training standards, curriculum and evaluation, as well as the planning of the resources for the vocational and technical education;
g) to develop the principles of the educational policy and propose the development strategies specific to initial vocational training, through the school network of the vocational and technical education, as well as the principles concerning the correlation of pre-university and university training in the field of vocational and technical education;
h) to ensure the scientific coordination of the innovatory and development projects in the field of vocational and technical education;
i) to design and develop programmes concerning the purchase of equipment and supply of material resources for the vocational and technical education, at the level of international vocational training standards;
j) to ensure the development and functioning of social partnership in vocational and technical education at national, regional and local level;
k) to ensure the training and participation of schools in the programmes and projects of social and economic development, at national, regional and local level;
l) to ensure, upon request of the Ministry of National Education, the training and participation of the representatives of institutions under the supervision of the ministry, in programmes covered by the European structural funds;
m) to provide consultancy and scientific coordination in matters concerning the planning of structures and resources specific to vocational and technical education;
n) to manage the financial resources coming from the State budget, or non-budgetary, allocated through national or international programmes in the field.

Article 4

The National Centre for the Development of Vocational and Technical Education shall cooperate in the field of research with the Institute for Educational Sciences, and other specialized institutions in the country or from abroad.

Article 5

The structure, personnel list, and the functioning regulation of the National Centre for the Development of Vocational and Technical Education shall be approved through the disposition of the Minister of National Education.

Article 6

In order to carry out its tasks in the territory, the National Centre for the Development of Vocational and Technical Education may propose the creation of branches at regional and county level, that are to be approved through the written disposition of the Minister of National Education.

Article 7

(1) The National Centre for the Development of Vocational and Technical Education shall be run by a Managing Board, made up of seven members, representatives of central public administration bodies, namely, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, the State Ownership Fund, the Reform Council, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry, the Ministry of Public Works and Land Use Planning, the Ministry of National Education. The tasks of the Managing Board shall be established through the Functioning Regulation of the National Centre for the Development of Vocational and Technical Education. The Director of the National Centre for the Development of Vocational and Technical Education shall also hold the position of President of the Managing Board.
(2) The programmes and strategic activities of the National Centre for the Development of Vocational and Technical Education shall be sanctioned by the National Centre for Continuing Training and Education, as a consultative structure of the Ministry of National Education.
(3) The Director of the National Centre for the Development of Vocational and Technical Education shall be appointed through the written disposition of the Minister of National Education, with the observance of the legal provisions in force.

Article 8

(1) The maximum number of positions in the National Centre for the Development of Vocational and Technical Education shall be of 50, and it shall not exceed the total number of positions approved by the Ministry of National Education for the education establishments.
(2) The wages of the personnel of the National Centre for the Development of Vocational and Technical Education shall be fixed according to the provisions in Annex no. VIII/1 of Law no. 154/1996 concerning basic wage- fixing system in the budgetary sector, and the emoluments granted to public dignitaries.
(3) The staff of the National Centre for the Development of Vocational and Technical Education shall be employed following an examination, according to the legal stipulations.

Article 9

(1) The expenditures related to the organization and functioning of the National Centre for the Development of Vocational and Technical Education shall be regulated according to the provisions in Article 70, paragraph (1), letter a) in the Law of Public Finances no. 72/1996.
(2) The funds shall be covered by the budget approved for the Ministry of National Education.

Article 10

(1) The equipment necessary to the organization and functioning of the National Centre for the Development of Vocational and Technical Education shall be provided through the transfer of the equipment and other means purchased through the Phare VET RO 9405 Programme, of which the main beneficiary is the Ministry of National Education.
(2) The National Centre for the Development of Vocational and Technical Education shall purchase extra-supplies, apart the initial equipment, with the observance of the legal provisions in force.

Article 11

Letter A.a) in Annex no. 2 - The institutions and establishments functioning under the supervision of the Ministry of National Education – of the Government Decision no. 690/1997 concerning the organization and functioning of

the Ministry of National Education, with further modifications and supplements, shall be completed with position IX[6] as follows:
"IX [6] the National Centre for the Development of Vocational and Technical Education State budget"

PRIME MINISTER
RADU VASILE

Countersigns

Minister of National Education
Andrei Marga

Minister of Finances
Decebal Traian Remes

Minister of Labour and Social Protection
Alexandru Athanasiu

Bucharest, November 26, 1998
No. 855

ROMANIA
MINISTRY OF NATIONAL EDUCATION

Approved through the Order of
the Minister of National Education

The Certification System and Organization Methodology Concerning the Graduation Exam in Vocational Schools within the EU - Phare VET RO 9405 Programme

Chapter I: GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 1

The certification system has been developed according to the Law on Education No. 84/1995, re-published.

Article 2

Phare - VET Programme functions on the basis of the provisions in the Memorandum on Financing signed by the Government of Romania - Ministry of Education and Science (MES) and the European Commission - Delegation, registered with MES, under the no. 28492/20.03.1995.

Article 3

The classified list of schools as well as the list of trades to which the Certification System shall be applied are presented in Annex 1*.

Article 4

The national coordination of the organization of the graduation exam shall be provided by the "National Commission of Valuation and Certification - Phare - VET Programme", set up according to the Order of the Minister of National Education.

Chapter II: THE CERTIFICATION SYSTEM

Article 5

Phare-VET certification system provides an alternative to the present certification system specific to vocational education, in conformity with the following principles:

(1) connecting the certification system with the demands of the labour market through the application of the Vocational Training Standards;
(2) development of an open and flexible certification system providing the opportunity of further training through the continuous education system, and also providing professional mobility and insertion on the labour market;
(3) decentralization of the valuation system through competency delegation at local level;
(4) adjustment of the certification system to the systems of the European Union with a view to ensuring their compatibility, and, in the future, their mutual acknowledgement;
(5) observance of the standard procedures, compatible with the international ones, concerning the valuation and certification process. (Among other provisions, one shall take into consideration the separation of institutions providing training from the ones ensuring certification. In this respect, the commission in charge with the final examination shall be made up of an evaluator who is not a member of the school staff, and a representative of the social partners.)

Article 6

Phare - VET certification system operates in two stages:

(1) granting a "Pre-qualification Certificate" to students, following general training or basic training of more than one year length (immediately followed by specialized training for a certain trade) within an occupational family (Annex 2*);
(2) granting the Graduation Diploma to candidates, following the studies in vocational school, together with the registration certificate;

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* For further information please contact The National Centre for Development of Vocational and Technical Education

Article 7

(1) The pre-qualification certificate is meant to certify the knowledge and qualification level of students who do no longer carry on their studies due to various reasons;
(2) The certificate is granted following a valuation organized in school, on the basis of the competencies described in the Vocational Training Standard (for basic or general training).
(1) (3)The pre-qualification certificate is a document issued by school, as shown in Annex 3*.

Article 8

(1) The students in vocational school acquire the Graduation Diploma of Phare-VET type for the trade they have been trained for. This diploma entitles the graduates to the same rights provided by the graduation diplomas of vocational schools within the present vocational training system. Diplomas shall be issued in conformity with the regulations concerning the study documents.
(2) Together with the graduation diploma, the school shall issue a certificate attesting the vocational competencies of the graduate, as shown in Annex 4.

Article 9

(1) The graduates owing a Graduation Diploma of vocational school of Phare - VET type are entitled to apply for re-specialization in the IIIrd or IVth year, depending on the basic training and/or general training, as shown in Annex 2, through equalization, for a trade differing from the one previously acquired, upon the request of an economic agent or at their free will.
(2) Training is carried out on the basis of a "Vocational Training Contract".
(3) After passing the new graduation exam, the candidate is granted a Graduation Diploma for the trade he/she has been re-specialized for.

Chapter III: THE METHODOLOGY CONCERNING THE ORGANIZATION OF THE GRADUATION EXAM

A. GRADUATION DIPLOMA OF VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

Article 10

The responsibility of the organization of the graduation exam falls under the competency of:
(1) at national level - the National Valuation and Certification Commission - Phare-VET Programme (NVCC - Phare-VET Programme).
(2) at local level - the Local Valuation Commission - Phare-VET Programme (LVC - Phare-VET Programme), made up of two members:
- the deputy general school inspector within the county school inspectorate;
- the president of Phare-VET Local Development Committee or another member, whenever the president is a teacher or holds a management position within the education system.

LVC - Phare -VET Programme is appointed on the basis of the decision of the general school inspector of each county, and, respectively, of the Bucharest municipality.
(3) at school level - the Examination Commission in the school organizing the exam, made up of six members:
- the director or the deputy director - as president of the commission;
- the representative of the economic agent for the selected trade, or, in absence, one representative of the Local Development Committee - as vice-president of the commission;
- two specialty teachers, one of them in charge with practical training - as members;
- one evaluator who is not a member of the school staff - as a member;
- the secretary of the commission - the school secretary or, according to the case, one teacher in the concerned school, who will be appointed by the president of the commission.

The examination commission shall be appointed by LVC - Phare-VET Programme, following the proposal of the School Administration Board, while the evaluator who is not a member of the school staff, shall be appointed by NCVC - Phare-VET Programme.
Whenever the evaluator who is not a member of the school staff is not specialized for the trade under evaluation, it is recommended to select another teacher in order to evaluate the **written test**.

Article 11

The tasks of the NCVC - Phare-VET Programme are the following:
(1) To monitor and guide the activities related to the organization of the graduation exam.

(2) To appoint the presidents of the examination commissions and the evaluators who are not members of the school staff, on the basis of the Minister's Order.
(3) To settle the subjects of the written tests by the use of lots.
(4) To determine the reserve subjects and decide, in exceptional cases, whether they are necessary or not.
(5) Receives from the LVC - Phare-VET Programme the reports concerning the graduation exam.
(6) Works out and publishes, on the basis of the reports received from the LCV, a report concerning the organization of the graduation exam.

Article 12

The tasks of the LVC – Phare - VET Programme are the following:
(1) Organizes the graduation exam in Phare-VET schools:
- proposes to NCVC - Phare-VET Programme, the presidents and evaluators that are not members of the school staff, for the examination commissions in schools.
- appoints, through written decisions, upon the proposal of schools, the members of the examination commissions in schools.
- receives the unsolved contestations and the written papers contested by the examination commissions in schools, and checks them again.

(2) Ensures the organization and unfolding of the graduation exam at county level:
- immediately notifies the NCVC - Phare-VET Programme about any situation requiring the cancellation, out of well-grounded reasons, of certain subjects of the examination.
- takes over, from the NCVC - Phare-VET Programme, on the basis of nominal delegation, through its members, the envelopes enclosing the subjects for the written tests and the checking and marking standards for the written tests.
- keeps, in full safety, the envelopes enclosing the subjects and standards, and communicates them to the examination commissions in schools, not earlier than one day prior to the written test.
- receives the detailed reports concerning the organization of the graduation exams from the examination commissions in schools.

(3) Analyzes the way the graduation exam has been organized in each county.
(4) Works out and communicates to the NCVC - Phare-VET Programme, the Report concerning the results within 10 days following the graduation exam.

Article 13

The tasks of the examination commissions in schools are the following:
- Organize the exam in each school.
- Receive the application files from candidates and checks whether the enclosed information is real.
- Work out the lists of the enrolled candidates.
- Work out the examination catalogues and fill them in.
- Distribute the candidates in the examination rooms and display their list on the school poster board 24 hours prior to the first test.
- Produce various forms of the written test that are, further, submitted, through a delegate, in a sealed envelope, to the NCVC - Phare-VET Programme.
- Develop the themes of the practical test.
- Train the teachers in charge with the supervision of the candidates during the exams.
- Immediately notify the LVC - Phare-VET Programme about any situation not complying with the Regulation concerning the graduation exam.
- Take over from the LVC - Phare-VET Programme, through the president (or, in exceptional cases, a delegate appointed by this one), and a member of the commission, the envelopes with the subjects and checking standards for the written test, also checking their integrity, and keep them in full safety, in sealed safety boxes.
- Make a number of copies of the subjects of the written tests, equal to the number of candidates, one hour prior to the beginning of the test.
- Monitor and guide the activity of all persons in school in charge with the organization of the exam.
- Exhibit the programme concerning the project.
- Receive the contestations from candidates and submit them to the LCV - Phare-VET Programme.

Article 14

Ensure the organization of the exam in each school:
- Distribute the subjects of the written test to each candidate in the examination rooms.
- Examine and give marks to the candidates for the examination tests.
- Write out the marks of the papers in the examination catalogue.

- Calculate the general average marks of the candidates, work out and display the lists of the examination results, together with the checking standards.
- Arrange for the graduation diplomas to be filled in.

Article 15

Analyze how the exam is to be organized:
- Work out and communicate to the LCV - Phare-VET Programme the final reports concerning the organization of the exam, within 10 days following the communication of results.
- Hand over all the documents concerning the examination to the management board of the school, on the basis of an official report.

Article 16

The graduation exam in the vocational school consists of the following tests:
- the practical test - eliminatory
- the written test
- a project

Article 17

(1) The graduation exam in vocational school shall be organized in conformity with the schedule determined by the Ministry of National Education.
(1) (2) Whenever a candidate does not pass the graduation exam, he/she is entitled to enter twice for the same examination within three years after graduating.

Article 18

(1) The graduation exam shall be organized in each school.
(2) The practical test shall be held in specialty offices (workshops, laboratories) of the school or economic establishments, under the permanent supervision of all the members of the examination commission. Whenever the practical test is held in an economic establishment, this aspect shall be stipulated in a protocol previously concluded by the parties.

Article 19

(1) The practical test is meant to check whether the candidate has developed the necessary skills and abilities for the performance of works specific to the trade he/she has been trained for.
(2) The list of subjects for the practical test is developed by the Methodical Specialty Commission in school, after consultation of the economic agents, and further sanctioned by the LCV - Phare-VET Programme, and announced at least 30 days prior to the date of the exam.
(3) The practical test involves a practical activity of 2 - 3 hours for each candidate.
(4) The subject of the practical test is determined for each candidate, the day the practical test is held, through the selection of an examination ticket from the subjects included in the shown list.
(5) The result of the practical test is evaluated as "accepted/rejected", on the basis of certain valuation criteria determined by the examination commission. The results of the practical test shall be displayed on the date the candidates sit for the test.
(6) The practical test can be taken into consideration for the following examination period, whenever the candidate fails the graduation exam, upon the request of the candidate and following the approval of the Administration Board of the concerned school.

Article 20

(1) The candidates that have been accepted following the practical test shall enter for the written test in conformity with the schedule.
(2) The written test shall have a 2 - 3 hour duration, and shall be held previously to the presentation of the project. The subjects of the written test shall be determined taking into account themes selected out of 2 - 3 subject matters with the greatest share for the specialty training. The themes are proposed by the Methodical Specialty Commission in school, further sanctioned by the School Administration Board, and displayed before March 31 in the last year of study.
(3) The subjects of the written test shall be developed by the examination commissions under the coordination and guidance of the National Commission for Valuation and Certification - Phare-VET Programme. More than one forms of the written test shall be developed, while the examination test shall be settled by the use of lots out of the previously developed options, by the president of the National Commission for Valuation and Certification - Phare-VET Programme.

Article 21

(1) The results of the written test shall be shown within 24 hours following the test. A candidate is considered as admitted whenever he/she gets at least mark 6.

(2) The contestations concerning the results of the written tests shall be registered with the school secretariat within 24 hours following the communication of lists.

(3) The registered contestations shall be solved in two distinct stages:
- by the examination commission in the vocational school;
- by the LVC - Phare-VET Programme of each county and of Bucharest municipality.

(4) In the first stage, the president of the commission receives the contestations and distributes them to the examiners, different from those that have previously checked them, in order to re-examine the papers.
The examiners revise all the concerned papers, checking whether the valuation and marking standards have been correctly applied and the calculations of the marks have been accurately made. The examiners write down the observations to be communicated to the candidates during the interviews. The examiners discuss with the candidates on the basis of the papers, explaining how the marks have been established. Only the parents, who are not allowed to intervene in the discussion, may attend the interview. In case the candidates and/or the parents agree with the marks, they will notify, in writing, the withdrawal of the contestation. Whenever the candidates or parents are not satisfied with the way the contestation has been solved by the examination commission in school, the candidates' papers shall be enclosed (thus covering the candidate's name and marks), stamped with the school stamp, and sent, noting on them each valuation standard, through a delegate, to the LVC - Phare-VET Programme. At the same time, a bordereau including the registration number of the papers, as well as the number of pages of each paper is transmitted. The president of the commission shall be in charge with the safety of the written papers.

(5) The county commissions in charge with solving the contestations are made up of the following members:
- the general school inspector - as president;
- a member of the Local Development Commission - as a representative of the social partners;
- two specialty teachers for each of the trades the graduation exam is organized for, other than the teachers who have previously been members of the examination commission.

The county commissions (and of Bucharest municipality) in charge with solving the contestations evaluate once more the received papers and mark the concerned papers, in conformity with the standards and methodology for the written papers applied by the examination commissions in vocational schools. Whenever, after checking again the concerned papers, the county commission (or that of Bucharest municipality) in charge with solving the contestations adds at least one point to the previous mark, the mark of the paper shall be modified and all measures related to this change shall be taken. The mark given by the county commission (and of Bucharest municipality) in charge with solving the contestation shall be irrevocable after validation by the president of the commission president. Whenever the final mark differs with more than one point - minus or plus - the president of the commission in charge with solving the contestation analyzes the situation and proposes to penalize the persons responsible for this situation. The contestations for these sanctions can be submitted to the NCVC - Phare-VET Programme within 7 days. The decisions of the county commission shall be written down in a report signed by the members of the commission and the president. The written papers, marking standards and bordereaux shall be handed back to the commissions of the vocational schools together with a copy of the report. The examination commissions in schools make the necessary changes in the catalogues, calculate the general graduation average mark, depending on the case, and modify, accordingly, the result. The results of the contestations shall be communicated to the concerned persons and displayed on the school poster board no later than five days following the date when contestations are handed in.

(6) The decision of the commission in charge with solving contestations shall be irrevocable.

Article 22

The graduation project is meant to check, in conformity with the developed curriculum:

(1) the candidate's capability to systematize and synthesize the general technical and specialty knowledge.

(2) the candidate's capability to solve practical problems concerning the technological processes related to the trade the graduate has been trained for.

(3) the candidate's availability to solve a case study or the situations involved by the theme of the work, and to perform the necessary practical works.

Article 23

(1) The school, under the supervision of teachers shall establish the criteria concerning the development of the project, and whenever the case, with the participation of social partners (economic establishments).

(2) The project supervisors, teachers who have previously taught specialty subjects or have run practical training, have the following tasks:

(a) to finalize, together with the concerned students, the project development plan;
(b) to recommend the minimum amount of bibliography and determine the necessary technical documentation;
(c) to guide and supervise the project development;
(d) to work out a paper recommending the project.

(3) In relation with certain aspects of the project, the supervisors may recommend or request from the management board of the school the support and guidance of other teachers and specialists in the field.

Article 24

(1) The project includes:
(a) an explanatory written statement;
(b) the contents;
(c) annexes.

(2) The project may be printed or hand written, in blue or black ink, while the diagrams may be drawn with a pencil.

(3) Depending on the trade, the candidates may be asked to execute certain component parts of some assemblies, such as patterns, devices, appliances, etc., as a part of the project theme. It is forbidden to acquire the works to be submitted for the graduation exam from other sources.

(4) The project supervisor checks the work and works out a paper proposing a certain mark, and, following the presentation of the project, the examination commission establishes the final mark. The minimum promotion mark is six.

(5) The project shall be registered with the secretariat of the school together with the paper worked out by the coordinator, one week prior to the end of the school year, and, further, kept in the school archives for three years.

(6) The project may be submitted, upon the candidate's application, only once more, in the following examination period.

Article 25

The project shall be worked out individually.

Article 26

The schedule of the project presentations shall be communicated to candidates together with the results of the written test. All candidates having participated in the written test are allowed to present the project.

Article 27

The average mark of the graduation exam is the result of the arithmetic mean, with two decimal plates, not as a round number, of the marks expressing the written test and the project.

Article 28

The candidates for the graduation exam shall register with the secretariat of each school within Phare-VET Programme, within the examination period scheduled by the Ministry of National Education, as follows:

- for the candidates registered for the respective school year, the lists shall be worked out by the form master, in conformity with the school records;
- for the candidates having attended the school in the previous years, and complying with the provisions in Article 28, paragraph (2), the lists shall be worked out by the secretaries of the examination commissions, on the basis of the necessary documents, submitted by candidates.

Article 29

NCVC - Phare-VET Programme shall submit the Final Report of the examination to the Ministry of National Education.

Article 30

The expenses related to the organization of the graduation exam shall be covered by the NCVC - Phare-VET Programme, from the budget especially ear-marked for this purpose.

B. THE PRE-QUALIFICATION CERTIFICATE

Article 31

The examination for the pre-qualification certificate shall be organized in conformity with the schedule established by the Ministry of National Education. The organization of this exam falls under the responsibility of:

(1) at national level - the National Valuation and Certification Commission - Phare-VET Programme (NCVC - Phare-VET Programme);

(2) at local level - the Local Valuation Commission - Phare-VET Programme (LVC - Phare-VET Programme), made up of two members:
- the deputy general school inspector within the county school inspectorate;
- the president of Phare-VET Local Development Committee, or another member, whenever the president is a teacher or holds another management position within the education system.

LVC - Phare-VET Programme is designated on the basis of the decision of the general school inspector of each county, and, respectively, of Bucharest municipality.

(3) at school level - the examination commission in the school organizing the exam, made up of four members:
- the director or deputy director - as president of the commission;
- two specialty teachers, one of which in charge with practical training - as members;
- an evaluator who is not a member of the school staff, as a representative of social partners in the field for which pre-qualification is organized;
- the secretary of the commission - the school secretary or, depending on the case, one of the schoolteachers, appointed by the president of the commission.

The examination commission shall be designated by the LVC - Phare-VET Programme, upon the proposal of the school Administration Board, while the evaluator who is not a member of the school staff shall be appointed by NCVC - Phare-VET Programme.

Article 32

The tasks of NCVC - Phare-VET Programme are the following:

(1) Supervises and guides the activities concerning the organization of the exam for the acquisition of the pre-qualification exam.

(2) Receives from LVC - Phare-VET Programme the reports concerning the organization of the graduation exam.

(3) Works out and submits to the management board of the Ministry of National Education, the final report of the examination, within 30 days following the exam.

Article 33

The tasks of LVC - Phare-VET Programme are the following:

(1) Organizes the examination for the acquisition of the pre-qualification certificate in Phare-VET schools;
- appoints, through written decision, the evaluators, who are not members of the school staff, for the examination commissions in schools.
- appoints, through written decision, upon the proposal of schools, the members of the examination commissions in schools.

(2) Ensures the organization of the exam for the acquisition of the pre-qualification certificate an county level:
- immediately notifies the NCVC - Phare-VET Programme about any situation requiring cancellation, out of well-grounded reasons, of certain examination subjects.
- receives from the examination commissions in schools the detailed reports concerning the organization of the graduation exams.

(3) Analyzes the organization of the exam in each county.

(4) Works out and communicates to the NCVC - Phare-VET Programme the Report concerning the results of the exam, within 10 days following it.

Article 34

The tasks of the examination commissions are the following:
- Organize the exam in each school.
- Receive the candidates' applications and check their school records. The students who have to go in for a second examination (after a non-pass during the school year) are not allowed to attend the exam.
- Work out the lists of the rejected candidates.
- Work out the examination catalogues and fill them in.
- Distribute the candidates for the places where the practical test takes place, and show, on the school poster board, their list 24 hours prior to the test.

- Produce the subjects of the practical test.
- Immediately notify the NCVC - Phare-VET Programme about any situation not complying with the Regulation concerning the organization of the exam.
- Check and guide the activity of all persons in school in charge with the organization of the exam.
- Examine and give marks to candidates for the practical test.
- Write down the marks for the practical test in the examination catalogue.
- Calculate the candidates' general average marks, work out and show the lists of the examination results, together with the valuation criteria.
- Arrange for the pre-qualification certificates to be filled in.

Article 35

Analyze how the exam has been organized:
- Work out and communicate to the LVC - Phare-VET Programme the final reports concerning the organization of the exam, within 10 days following the communication of results.
- Hand over to the management board of schools, all the examination documents together with an official report.

Article 36

In order to acquire the pre-qualification certificate, the following aspects shall be taken into consideration:
- the candidate's general average mark at the end of the general technical training (which is the average mark after I year and a half or two years of study, depending on the case);
- a practical test.

Article 37

Whenever a candidate fails in the examination for the pre-qualification certificate, he/she may take the exam only once more within three years following the end of the general technical training.

Article 38

(1) The examination for the pre-qualification certificate shall be organized in each vocational school.
(2) The practical test shall be held in specialty offices (workshops, laboratories) of schools or economic enterprises, under the permanent supervision of all the members of the examination commission. Whenever the practical test is held in an economic enterprise, this aspect shall be stipulated in a protocol previously concluded between the parties.

Article 39

(1) The practical test is meant to check how the candidate has acquired the necessary skills and abilities for the performance of the works specific to the training.
(2) The list of subjects for the practical test shall be established by the Specialty Commission in the school, after consultation of the economic agents, further approved by the LVC - Phare-VET Programme, and displayed at least 30 days prior to the exam.
(3) Each practical test involves a 1 to 3 hours practical activity.
(4) The subject of the practical test shall be established for each candidate, on the day the test takes place, through the selection of one examination ticket out of the subjects included in the list.
(5) The result of the practical test shall be expressed in marks from 1 to 10, on the basis of certain valuation criteria established by the Examination Commission. The minimum passing mark of the practical test is 6 (six). The results of the practical test shall be communicated on the day the test is held.

Article 40

The average mark of the exam for the pre-qualification certificate is the result of the arithmetic mean, with two decimal plates, not expressed as a round number, of the general average mark and of the practical test mark.

Article 41

The candidates applying for the examination for pre-qualification certificate shall register with the secretariat of each school within Phare-VET Programme, according to the examination schedule approved by the Ministry of National Education, as follows:
- for the candidates attending the respective year of study, the class masters, in conformity with the school records shall work out the lists.

- for the candidates having attended the previous school years, complying with the provisions in Article 38, paragraph 2, they shall be worked out by the secretaries of the Examination Commissions, on the basis of the necessary documents, submitted by candidates.

Article 42

The NCVC - Phare-VET Programme shall submit the Final Report of the exam to the Ministry of National Education.

Article 43

The expenses related to the organization of the exam for the pre-qualification certificate shall be covered by the NCVC - Phare-VET Programme, from the budget especially earmarked for this purpose.

ANNEX 7

REGULATION CONCERNING THE ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTIONING OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR CONTINUOUS TRAINING AND EDUCATION

- References to Vocational Training -

Chapter I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 1

The National Council for Continuous Training and Education is an advisory body of the Ministry of National Education set up as a multi-party system with a view to:

(1) cooperating with the specialty directorates and departments within the Ministry of National Education and with the National Centre for the Development of Vocational and Technical Education with a view to carrying into effect the reform of the Romanian pre-university vocational and technical education;
(2) developing the dialogue among the main social partners within the vocational training system through school;
(3) supporting the quick insertion of the graduates of vocational and technical education on the labour market.

Article 2

The National Council for Continuous Training and Education is not a legal person, having been set up on the basis of the partners' free consent, who authorize their specialists to represent them for a period of at least one school year.

Article 3

The basic principles of partnership are the following:

- equality of rights and respect among partners;
- the right to information of partners for issues concerning the labour market and the Romanian vocational and technical education reform;
- the right to decisional autonomy of partners concerning the tasks falling under their competency according to law or to the organization and functioning regulation of the institution they are representing.

Article 4

The word "partner" shall refer, hereinafter, to the following types of institutions:

- the Government;
- the union-trades;
- the employers' organizations;
- the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Romania, "UCECOM" (the Union of Artisans' Centres) and other NGO's.

Chapter II. THE OBJECTIVES OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR CONTINUOUS TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Article 5

The objectives of the National Council for Continuous Training and Education are the following:

(1) To promote an active partnership at national, regional and local level, among those institutions concerned in the promotion and development of vocational and technical education, in conformity with the trends of the educational policy and the principles of the market economy;
(2) To optimize the relation between the educational offer and the demand on the labour market;
(3) To bring together the initial and continuous training system provided by school with the needs of the economic agents;
(4) To spread the information about the vocational and technical education reform;
(5) To approve the structure of qualifications for the labour market provided through the pre-university vocational and technical education system, in conformity with the Romanian strategies concerning the economic and social development.

Chapter III. THE ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTIONING OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR CONTINUOUS TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Article 6

(1) The National Council for Continuous Training and Education is made up of representatives of the Government, Employers' Confederations, Trade-Union Confederations, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Romania, "UCECOM", and other NGO's, up to the limit of 21 persons.

(2) The Regional Development Agencies shall appoint one representative for the National Council for Continuous Training and Education as observers. Any of the specialty inspectors within the National Centre for the Development of Vocational and Technical Education may take part in the meetings of the council as an observer.

Article 7

The list of the members of the National Council for Continuous Training and Education shall be updated at the beginning of each school year.

Article 8

The National Council for Continuous Training and Education shall meet every three months or whenever necessary, upon the request of the Ministry of National Education or of the National Centre for the Development of Vocational and Technical Education.

Article 9

The National Council for Continuous Training and Education shall appoint one president; one representative appointed by each partner shall hold the presidency by turns. The president works together with three vice-presidents, representing the partners of the institution holding the presidency.

Article 10

The president may delegate his/her tasks, out of well-grounded reasons, for a certain period of time, to one of the vice-presidents.

Article 11

The meetings can be summoned at least one week in advance, on the basis of the agenda, proposed by the president in exercise, upon consultation of the representatives of the Ministry of National Education and of the other social partners.

Article 12

The National Council for Continuous Training and Education shall:

- work out analysis;
- produce recommendations;
- develop proposals;
- issue approvals for problems concerning the classified lists of trades, school plans, vocational training standards, curricula, intermediary and final valuations of the education process and certification of vocational training.

Article 13

The works of the National Council for Continuous Training and Education shall be finalized in a session report and a list of recommendations, to be communicated to the management boards of the partner institutions through the secretariat of the council and the specialists appointed by each of them.

Article 14

With a view to supporting the decision-making process, the members of the group place at the disposal of the partners the available information about the labour market, at local, regional and national level.

Article 15

The recommendations of the National Council for Continuous Training and Education stand for the two-third's majority vote of the present members, on condition that each partner should have at least one representative.

Article 16

The Ministry of National Education shall watch that the recommendations formulated during the sessions of the council comply with the Law on Education and the other regulations in force.

Article 17

(1) The National Council for Continuous Training and Education may set up its own operational structures (working groups) where the experts of the institutions having appointed their representatives shall carry out the activity. The working groups may also be made up of representatives of institutions, other than those which are members of the National Council for Continuous Training and Education.
(2) The working groups can be mainly set up as follows:
- *the working group for vocational training planning (substantiating the school plan),* meant to provide relevant information related to:
  - labour market and individual needs
- *the working group for initial and continuous training through school*, meant to provide relevant information related to:
  - vocational training standards;
  - education plan;
  - certification forms.
- *the working group for vocational training financing through school*, directed towards issues concerning:
  - the legislation in the field;
  - mechanisms.
- *the working group meant to stimulate the relation economic agents - school*, concerning:
  - fields of cooperation;]
  - types of institutional relations;
  - legislation in the field.

(3) The National Council for Continuous Training and Education may also create other working groups meant to cope with other issues related to the specific fields of activity.

Article 18

The National Council for Continuous Training and Education shall determine the priorities of the activities carried out by the working groups on the basis of their own agenda, also taking into consideration the proposals of the concerned groups.

Article 19

(1) Each member of the council has the right and obligation to participate as a member in at least one working group and not more than two working groups.
(2) The working groups are made up of the council members, to which one representative of the institutions relevant for the activity field of the group can be added, with the observance, in general, of the multi-party structure.

Article 20

(1) The working groups shall choose/appoint one president and one secretary.
(2) The working groups shall meet once a month and whenever necessary.

Article 21

The documents produced within the working groups and sanctioned by the majority of members shall be submitted to the approval of the National Council for Continuous Training and Education.

Chapter IV. FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 22

The National Council for Continuous Training and Education shall cease its activity upon the initiative of the body having summoned it, respectively, the Ministry of National Education.

Article 23

This regulation can be modified by two-third's majority of votes of the total number of the council, on condition that each partner should be represented.

ROMANIA
MINISTRY OF NATIONAL EDUCATION - ROMANIA
NATIONAL CENTRE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF
VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

FUNCTIONING REGULATION OF THE LOCAL COMMITTEE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP FOR VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Chapter I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 1

The Local Committee for the Development of social partnership for vocational training - LCD - is an organizational structure aiming at promoting the role of social partnership in vocational training, achieved through the school institutions operating in each county. LCD is a managerial consultative structure.
In this respect, the working committee set up by the Local Development Committee shall act as a working group representative for the social partnership for vocational training, within the Consultative Counsel of the School Inspectorate, organized according to the law.

Article 2

The headquarters of LCD shall, generally, be located in the capital of the county. For certain places where economic restructuring programmes are being carried out, it is recommended to set up local commissions organized according to the same principles, functioning on the basis of a partnership convention.

Chapter II. OBJECTIVES OF PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES WITHIN LCD

Article 3

The activity of LCD is focused on the achievement, through joint actions at educational system, community and social partners levels, of the following major objectives:

- correlation of the vocational and technical education offer with the demands of the labour market and the future students' concerns;
- increase of the educational system capability to meet the real needs of the labour market and the demands of the society according to the trends of the economic development;
- integration of vocational training in local and regional economic and social development projects;
- development and diversification of the partnership relations school - economic agent - local community;
- providing a successful vocational guidance and counseling of students;
- development and application of graduates' entrepreneurial capability;
- supporting the social and professional insertion of graduates;
- involvement of the social partners in the development of:
  - vocational training standards;
  - the planned curriculum for local development activities with a view to ensuring the occupational mobility and the social and professional insertion;
- development of the partnership relations for the organization of students' practical training courses;
- involvement of social partners in the evaluation and certification process concerning the students' training, and providing the necessary feed-back related to the training system;
- participation (through offers) of the vocational and technical education in the continuous vocational training on the labour market through:
  - qualification/re-qualification courses;
  - specialization/further training or professional reconversion programmes;
  - other programmes of active measures meant to prevent unemployment;
- improvement of the allocation system of financial resources for the initial vocational training, their development and efficient utilization.

Chapter III. TASKS OF THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Article 4

The tasks of the Local Development Committee are the following:

- to provide the organizational framework at local level, for the development and operation of social partnership for vocational training;
- in its relation with the School Inspectorate: it acts as a consultative body for vocational training;
- in its relation with the local authority representatives and administration: it promotes the interests of social partnership, meant to correlate the relevant policies and programmes for the development of vocational and technical education;
- in its relation with the civil society: it promotes the involvement of the civil society (parents, students, NGO's, professional associations, etc.) in the issues concerning vocational training;
- in its relation with the social partners from economic sectors (enterprises, employers' organizations, trade-unions): it promotes their active involvement in the initial and continuous vocational training processes;
- in its relation with the regional structures: it promotes regional cooperation for the correlation and integration of vocational training programmes within the regional development programmes;
- shall propose and/or analyze the proposals for "atypical" (of local relevance) trades for their promotion, upon the request of economic agents or other social partners;
- shall approve the proposals concerning the introduction of certain new trades (in vocational schools), and, respectively, specializations (in high-schools and post high-schools) - upon the request of the economic agents or other social partners and shall further submit them for approval to the National Council for Training and Continuous Education (a consultative body of the Ministry of National Education);
- approves the educational plans for vocational schools and technological high-schools;
- approves the education plan for post high-schools, for educational institutions, on the basis of the proposals of the education institutions or upon the request of the economic agents or other concerned institutions, thus ensuring a number of candidates for which finances are provided, at least equal to the minimum number of students stipulated by law for each form;
- within the organization responsibilities concerning the graduation examination in post high-school, the president of LDC shall be one of the two members of the Evaluation County Commission (ECC). At the same time, LDC shall provide consultancy for the designation of the examination commissions in schools and the appointment of the evaluator who is not a member of the school staff, taking part in the examination commissions;
- within the organization responsibilities concerning the graduation examination in vocational school, the president or another member shall be one of the two members of the county Local Evaluation Commission; in schools, one representative of the Local Development Committee (in the absence of the representative of the economic agent) shall be the vice-president of the examination commission in each school; within the county commissions in charge with the contestations, one of the four members shall be a member of LDC representing the social partners; for the examination meant to grant the pre-qualification certificate at local level, one of the two members shall be the president of LDC or another member, whenever the president is a teacher or holds a management position within the educational system.

Chapter IV. ORGANIZATION OF THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Article 5

The local development committee shall be made up of:

a) multi-party structure of local partnership (permanent members entitled to vote):
   - representatives of local and central public administration (Prefect's Office, County Council, Mayoralty/Local Council, School Inspectorate, Directorate of Labour, University, etc.);
   - representatives of the economic agents, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and of the employers' organizations;
   - representatives of trade-unions;

b) guests/consultants.

The Local Development Committee shall be made up of 10 up to 20 members.

NOTE: The list of the members of LDC is not exhaustive, is adjustable, and of a balanced tripartite structure. It can include as permanent members, with full authority, representatives of the civil society, NGO's, etc. The meetings organized by LDC may also be attended by other relevant local institutions, representatives of complementary programmes, personalities in the fields of culture, techniques, science, etc., contributing to the achievement of the reform objectives and to the stimulation of social partnership.

Article 6

The organization and functioning of LDC are determined by the following principles:

- the Local Development Committee, a heterogeneous structure from the point of view of the represented institutions, is homogeneous in respect to the purposes/goals aimed in the implementation process of the vocational and technical education reform programme.
- the fair and non-concurrent convergence of the contributions of institutions entitled to support the education process stands for the foremost imperative of the activity of LDC.

Article 7

In order to ensure its operation and representativeness, LDC shall designate, every year, by the majority vote of its members, a management structure - preferably a balanced representativeness (multi-party or tripartite) - made up, depending on the case of: one president, 2 - 3 vice-presidents and/or a secretary with executive tasks.

Article 8

The LDC may organize working structures that shall contribute, according to the themes or sectors, to the carrying out and monitoring of the proposed activities and objectives. The operational structure shall not create departments or other organizational bodies, or an administrative subordination - as each member may assume a specific responsibility.

Article 9

When making decisions, one shall try to achieve the full agreement of social partners. Whenever full agreement can not be reached, the decisions of LDC shall be adopted following the majority vote of its members. The decisions made by LDC shall not prejudice the decisional autonomy of its members in respect to the tasks devolving upon them according to the law or to the statute. The decisions made by LDC shall be considered as recommendations and submitted to the entitled institutions for which - for the application of the adopted decisions - LDC is lobbying or carries out monitoring activities.

Article 10

The president of LDC or, by delegation, one of the vice-presidents or the secretary of LDC, shall represent the Local Development Committee within the organization regional or national structures of social partnership for vocational training.

Chapter V. FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 11

LDC shall hold plenary meetings every three months, at a pre-determined date, or whenever necessary.

ANNEX 9

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THE MINISTRY OF NATIONAL EDUCATION
issues

DISPOSITION
No. 3513 of March 30, 1999

concerning the decentralization of pre-university education and consolidation of institutional autonomy in schools and high-schools

Together with the concretization and consolidation of university autonomy, ensured through adequate regulations adopted by the Parliament, the Government and the Ministry of National Education, the decentralization of pre-university education, the creation and consolidation of institutional autonomy of schools and high-schools stand for an essential component of the organizational and managerial education reform.
The present Ministry of National Education has promoted in this respect, in conformity with the legislation in force, concrete measures meant to decentralize pre-university education and to create the institutional autonomy of schools and high-schools:
The extra-budgetary resources of schools, high-schools and universities have acquired full institutional autonomy through the Disposition of the Minister of National Education no. 3176 of January 29, 1998 (Disposition completed by the Disposition of the Minister of National Education no. 3378 of March 10, 1998 and the Disposition of the Minister of National Education no. 4356 of August 24, 1998).

The admission of foreign pupils, students and candidates for a doctor's degree (upon a certain "fee") is completely in the charge of the institutional autonomy of schools, high-schools, universities, according to the Disposition of the Minister of National Education no. 3266 of February 16, 1998.

According to the Disposition of the Minister of National Education no.3382 of March 10, 1998, the students' transfer has been decentralized and handed over to the full competency of school inspectorates, while according to the Disposition of the Minister of National Education no. 4579 of September 21, 1998, the transfer of students from primary, gymnasium and vocational education shall be fully handed over to the school competency.

The organization of continuous training has been handed over to the regional centres and education institutions, according to the Disposition of the Minister of National Education no. 3407 of March 13, 1998.

The school inspectorates and management boards of schools and high-schools shall assume the responsibility concerning the quality of the ambience and of adequate medical assistance in the respective education institution, within the Policy on health in schools, high-schools and universities, according to the Disposition of the Minister of National Education no. 3484 of March 30, 1998.

According to the Disposition of the Minister of National Education no.3531 of April 8, 1998, the litigations shall be submitted to the county discipline boards, according to Law no. 128/1997 and Regulation no.3207 of February 4, 1998, while the petitions unsolved by school inspectorates shall be submitted to the Ministry of National Education.

According to the Disposition of the Minister of National Education no.3592 of April 22, 1998, transportation to/from schools shall fall under the competency of the county school inspectorates, management boards of schools and high-schools in cooperation with the local authorities.

According to the Disposition of the Minister of National Education no. 3667 of May 5, 1998, the teachers' travels abroad during the school periods shall be approved by the management boards of schools and high-schools.

According to the Disposition of the Minister of National Education no. 3702 of May 12, 1998, the management board of schools and high-schools together with the school inspectorates shall authorize schools and high-schools not to function anymore "in shifts".

According to the Disposition of the Minister of National Education no.3761 of May 18, 1998, the management boards of schools and high-schools shall be authorized to reintegrate the material resources into their assets, in conformity with the Law on Education (Article 166).

According to the Disposition of the Minister of National Education no. 3810 of May 25, 1998, the competency for the examinations for the occupation of vacant positions in schools and high-schools shall be handed over to the school inspectorates and management boards of the education institutions, in conformity with the provisions in the Law on Education (1995) and of the Teachers' Statute (1997).

According to the Disposition of the Minister of National Education no. 4145 of June 13, 1998, the gymnasium - leaving examination shall be considered as the basis of the entrance to high-schools, while the teachers' councils shall be authorized to organize, on an autonomous basis, the entrance (examinations) to schools and high-schools.

According to the Disposition of the Minister of National Education no. 4424 of July 22, 1998 and the Disposition of the Minister of National Education no. 3449 of March 15, 1999, the methodology of optional subjects (falling under the competency of schools and high-schools) has been reconsidered.

According to the Disposition of the Minister of National Education no. 4291 of July 31, 1998, the management board of schools and high-schools shall be authorized to organize extracurricular, systematic and modern activities, in the field of foreign languages, physical training and esthetical education for students.

According to the Disposition of the Minister of National Education no. 4560 of September 16, 1999, and the Disposition of the Minister of National Education no. 3006 of January 4, 1998, the school inspectorates shall be authorized to establish the school network in villages.

According to the Notification no.12725 of September 21, 1998, the management boards of schools and high-schools shall be authorized to "unburden" the students' programme and introduce optional subjects in schools and high-schools.

According to the Disposition of the Minister of National Education no. 5066 of November 20, 1998, the textbooks for high-schools shall be selected by the teachers in high-schools on the free market of the legally authorized school textbooks.

According to the Disposition of the Minister of National Education no. 3066 of January 11, 1999, the management boards of schools and high-schools shall be authorized to lay the stress on learning during school classes and to reduce the number of homework's, in conformity with the modern practices.

The Notification no. 27827 of February 25, 1999, specifies the guiding lines of the application of the coefficients concerning the increase in wages in pre-university education, in conformity with Law no 154/1998.

According to the Disposition of the Minister of National Education no. 3421 of March 1999, the management boards of schools shall develop and apply the financial project and the school project.

According to the Disposition of the Minister of National Education no. 5013 of November 1998, the competencies concerning the planning of the vocational training offer have been delegated to the school inspectorates, depending on the concerns and needs of students and local communities, with the observance of the social partnership in the organization of vocational training.

According to the Disposition of the Minister of National Education no.3230 of February 10, 1999, starting with 1999-2000 school year, the competencies concerning the organization of vocational training have been delegated to the school inspectorates, while the competencies related to the development of the curriculum planned in a 30% ratio for local, optional and cross-curricular developments have been delegated to the education institutions.

According to all these regulations adopted in 1998 and 1999 by the Ministry of National Education, in conformity with the Romanian legislation on education, in force, the pre-university education have been decentralized according to the modern practices accepted by the European education systems, and has been re-oriented towards the creation and consolidation of school and high-school institutional autonomy. The decentralization and consolidation process of school and high-school institutional autonomy should be carried on.

The Romanian legislation on education has regulated a number of aspects related to the pre-university education towards its decentralization and the creation of school and high-school institutional autonomy.

According to the Law on Education (1995) "the expenditures related to the maintenance and repair works for the didactic and material supplies of education institutions in the pre-university education shall be covered by the county and local councils from the funds especially allocated by the State budget, local budgets, as well as from their own sources." (Article 167). The same Law stipulates that "the financing of education shall ensure the

decentralization of fund management and shall allow the involvement of local communities in the allocation of additional financial sources for education" (Article 169).

In conformity with the Teachers' Statute (1997), "the methodological coordination of examinations for the occupation of vacant didactic positions in the State education shall be provided by the Ministry of National Education, while their organization shall be ensured by school inspectorates, as well as by the representative education institutions, established by the Ministry of National Education" (Article 92).

According to the Law on Local Public Finances (1998), "the current and capital expenditures of public institutions and services of local interest shall be covered as follows:

1. integrally, from the local budget, depending on their subordination;
2. from extra-budgetary incomes and subsidies provided by the local budget, depending on their subordination;
3. integrally, from extra-budgetary incomes." (Article 35, paragraph 1).

According to same Law, Annex 2 the local budgets provide expenditures for pre-school, primary, gymnasium, high-school, vocational, and post high-school education, as well as for boarding schools, hostels and canteens for students (allocations from local budgets supplementing their own incomes).

According to the Law on local public administration (1991), the local council has the initiative and decides, with the observance of the law, in problems of local concern, except those falling under the competency of other public authorities, according to the law. The local council ensures the conditions necessary to the functioning of local education, health, culture and youth institutions, under its authority.

According to the Law on the State Budget for 1999, Article 34, paragraph 1: "The expenditures for pre-university education institutions, except the expenditures related to the staff ... shall be covered by the local budget of the administrative and territorial institutions governing them."

According to the same Law, Article 34, paragraph 5 stipulates: "The local councils shall approve, with priority, the funds necessary to the financing of education expenditures established on the basis of this law."

With a view to ensuring the decentralized functioning of pre-university education and to consolidating school and high-school institutional autonomy, on the basis of the provisions of the Government Decision no. 690/1997 concerning the organization and operation of the Ministry of National Education, with further modifications and supplemented,

The Minister of National Education
decides:

1. The decentralization of pre-university education - seen as a transfer of new decisional competencies towards the school inspectorates and the management boards and administration councils of schools and high-schools - and the consolidation of school and high-school institutional autonomy - seen as an extension and internalization of decisional competencies and responsibilities of the management boards and administration councils concerning the operation and quality of the operation specific to their own school or high-school, and to the acquired performances - are carried on within the education process, as a part of the reform in progress.
2. The decentralization and institutional autonomy of schools and high-schools are focused on: the didactic activities within the context of the application of the new national curriculum; the financial activities concerning the accumulation and utilization of extra-budgetary resources and the utilization of extra-budgetary resources; the provision of the infrastructure in cooperation with the local authorities and communities; the provision of social facilities (scholarships, transportation to/from school, etc.) in cooperation with the local authorities; the employment of the didactic (depending on the case stipulated by law, of the institutions established by the Ministry of National Education) and non-didactic staff; the development of projects concerning their own development; the integration into the local economic, administrative and cultural context.
3. The decentralization and institutional autonomy of schools and high-schools shall be carried into effect on the basis of the legislation in force, with a view to achieving the education finalities, stipulated by the law.
4. The decentralization and institutional autonomy of schools and high-schools stand for - in conformity with the modern practices specific to the present European education systems - instruments meant to increase the efficiency and responsibility of the management boards and administration councils of schools and high-schools, concerning the operation, quality of operation and their performances.
5. In conformity with the legislation on education, in force, and with the regulations of the Ministry of National Education, the administration councils and management boards of schools and high-schools shall be authorized to:

a) make use of the budgetary resources in conformity with the legal regulations in force;
b) accumulate and make use in an autonomous manner, of the extra-budgetary resources;

c) apply the Law no.154/1998 concerning wage fixing in education, and apply the multiplication coefficients provided in the "Note" included in this law on the basis of extra-budgetary resources;
d) accumulate extra-budgetary resources through continuous training services, long-distance education, consultancy and other activities corresponding to the nature of education;
e) request budgetary allocations from the local authorities, in conformity with the legislation on local public administration and with the Law on the State Budget for 1999, for investments, current repair works, overhauls, administration expenditures of schools and high-schools, and to utilize in an autonomous manner these allocations, and rationalize the school programmes of their own students;
f) request budgetary allocations from local authorities, in conformity with the legislation on local public administration and the Law on the state Budget for 1999, for students' scholarships and transportation;
g) request budgetary allocations from local authorities, in conformity with the Teachers' Statute (1997), concerning the allocation of benefits for commutation and other benefits for teachers, stipulated by law as an obligation of local authorities;
h) determine the "local share" of the curriculum of the concerned school or high-school, and to determine and communicate the optional subjects for students;
i) select the text-books from the free market of the authorized manuals for high-school education;
j) design and organize the entrance of students to high-schools and vocational schools;
k) decide students' transfer;
l) decide teachers' travels abroad during school periods;
m) support the participation of their own teachers to the continuous training;
n) develop analyses on the progress of school or high-school in relation with the economic, demographic, infrastructural premises, and propose structures of the local school network depending on these analyses;
o) cooperate with the local authorities and community with a view to financing the respective school or high-school, to correlating the school or high-school with the local qualification needs, involving the parents - in conformity with modern practices - when determining the options within the school project and the form project;
p) initiate and carry out international cooperation activities;
q) develop and implement the financial project and the school project;
r) appoint - in honorary or operational positions - personalities from administration, culture, notable representatives of the local economy, in the local councils determining` the strategic development of the concerned school or high-school;

6. The Ministry of National Education shall establish the list of the representative institutions, in conformity with Article 9, paragraph 3 in the Law on the Teachers' Statute no. 128/1997.
7. The director of each school or high-school shall organize a working meeting, involving local authorities and parents, in order to determine the competencies and responsibilities of the concerned school or high-school on the basis of the legislation on education in force.
8. The general inspectors shall notify, under adequate forms, the administration of schools and high-schools about the competencies and responsibilities falling under their competency according to the legislation on education, in force.
9. The General Directorate for Pre-University Education as well as the competent directorates, school directorates, management boards of schools and high-schools shall apply this Disposition.

MINISTER,
Andrei Marga

Adviser Dakmara Georgescu	Adviser Catalin Baba	Secretary General Horia Gavrila
Director General Liliana Preoteasa	Director General Madlen Serban	Director General Doina Chilarescu
Director Alexandru Tion	Director Lucia Gliga	Director Cristian Mirescu
Director Ioan Neacsu	Solicitor's Office	

ANNEX 10

ROMANIA
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THE MINISTRY OF NATIONAL EDUCATION
issues:

DISPOSITION
No. 3670/April 21, 1999

concerning the Methodology of the Organization of the Exam for the Occupation of Vacant Didactic Positions/Chairs in the Representative Education Institutions of pre-University Education*

In conformity with the provisions in Article 141, letter p), Article 142, letter f) in Law no. 84/1995, re-published with modifications, and in Article 9, paragraphs 1,2,3 in Law no. 128/1997 concerning the Statute of the Teaching Staff.

In accordance with the Decision of the Government of Romania no. 690/1997 concerning the organization and functioning of the Ministry of National Education, with subsequent modifications.

THE MINISTER OF NATIONAL EDUCATION
decides:

Article 1. The Methodology concerning the Organization of the Exam for the Occupation of the Vacant Didactic Positions/Chairs in the Representative Education Institutions in pre-University Education, enclosed in the Annex which is integrant part of this disposition.

Article 2. All stipulations contrary to this methodology shall be abrogated starting with the date this disposition enters into force.

Article 3. The Directorate of Human Resources within the Ministry of National Education together with the school inspectorates shall carry into practice this disposition.

MINISTER
Andrei Marga

Secretary of State,
Floare Comsea

Secretary General,
Horia Gavrila

Director General,
Madlen Serban

Director General,
Doina Chilarescu

Director,
Lucia Gliga

Solicitor's office

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No. 30469 of April 6, 1999

Sanctioned

SECRETARY OF STATE

SPECIFICATIONS

concerning the Selection of the Representative Education Institutions

Chapter I. GENERAL ASPECTS

1. The Mini9istry of National Education shall organize, monitor, guide and supervise the selection process of the representative institutions of pre-university education. In the school year 1998-1999, one shall coordinate the *organization* of exams in order to occupy the vacant positions within the representative institutions.
2. The Ministry of National Education shall decentralize the decisions concerning the selection process of the representative institutions with the observance of a unitary national selecting framework through the development of a compulsory minimal criterional grid;
3. The Ministry of National Education shall consult the social partners when producing the compulsory minimal grid with a view to developing a framework able to ensure the quality of the education process, and to developing the functional operational capacity of the education institutions, as well as finalizing the selection.
4. The Ministry of National Education shall focus, in the selection performed for 1998-1999 school year, on the representativeness correlated with the institutional development of the education establishment without taking into consideration in a unilateral manner the performances acquired by students as an expression of the school education quality.
5. The selection of education institutions shall be yearly revised.
6. The school inspectorates shall submit the proposals concerning the representative institutions in the county (municipality) they are coordinating, until April 19, 1999. Within 3 days following this date, the Ministry of National Education shall finalize the selection and communicate the final result to the County School Inspectorate (the School Inspectorate of Bucharest Municipality).

Chapter II. THE SCHOOL INSPECTORATES SHALL PASS ON TO THE SELECTION OF THE REPRESENTATIVE INSTITUTIONS UNDER THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS

1. The maximum number of the representative institutions selected for 1998-1999 school year shall be included in the 3 - 5% ratio of the total number of education institutions within the county school network, and at least one education institution for each school level shall be represented; in this respect, both education institutions in urban areas and those in rural areas shall be taken into consideration, but there is no obligation to observe their parity in the selection process.
2. The school inspectorates shall sanction the selection carried out within the Administration Board of the County School Inspectorate (the School Inspectorate of Bucharest Municipality) only following the approval of the Advisory Council.
3. The proposals concerning the representative institutions shall be applied only for those institutions with vacant positions for which exams for teachers in ordinary are organized in 1999.

Chapter III. COMPULSORY CRITERIA THAT SHALL BE APPLIED IN THE SELECTION OF THE REPRESENTATIVE INSTITUTIONS OF PRE-UNIVERSITY EDUCATION (TO BE COMPLETED BY THE COUNTY SCHOOL INSPECTORATES (THE INSPECTORATE OF BUCHAREST MUNICIPALITY) WITH THE OBSERVANCE OF THE SPECIFICATIONS IN ARTICLE 1)

1. compulsory education
- the percentage of school drop for primary education;
- the percentage of school drop for secondary education;
- the percentage of graduates who carry on their studies.

2. high-school and vocational school
- the education institution has acquired the title of college/national college;
- the percentage of carrying into effect the school plan in July period of study for the previous two years;
- the percentage of school drop;
- the percentage of graduates carrying on their studies or that have been employed;
- the results of the school-leaving examination and the graduation exam for vocational education, in June-July 1998.

3. common criteria
- didactic innovation projects carried out by the education institution;
- extra-curricular educational activities;
- cooperation within the local community;
- training courses for the didactic staff of the education institution;
- the progress made by students in their studies - comparison of the results of the previous two years of study;
- students' school performances in contests organized for various subject matters or trades in 1997-1998 school year.

The evaluation of the records of the candidate education institution shall take into consideration the following specifications;
- the criteria mentioned at 3.1. and 3.2. shall place the education institution on the first places of the classification according to these indices at county (or municipality) level, in respect of the positive results (excepting criterion 3.2.1. which does not have a restrictive nature);
- the criteria mentioned at 3.3. must simultaneously be carried out and they shall have an equal share in the evaluation of conditions whenever the education institution, according to its results, holds the first positions in conformity with the classifications drawn up by school inspectorates on the occasion of the recent analyses of the activities carried out in the concerned county (municipality).

In case of equal shares, one shall take into account the relevance of the mentioned activities for the efficiency of the educational process, as well as the training of the management board of the education institution in the field of the educational management.

The analysis concerning the criteria mentioned at 3.1. and 3.2. shall refer to 1997-1998 school year, except those cases when other specifications are mentioned.

The analysis of criteria mentioned at 3.3. shall start at September 1st 1996, except those cases when other specifications are mentioned.

Director General
Madlen Serban

Director, Personnel, Network, Management Directorate
Lucia Gliga

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THE MINISTRY OF NATIONAL EDUCATION
issues:

DISPOSITION
No. 3801 of May 11, 1999

concerning the Establishment of the Representative Education Institutions of Pre-University Education for 1998-1999 School Year
(part I: representative institutions organizing the examination for the occupation of vacant didactic positions)

Taking into consideration the provisions in the Law no.128/1997 concerning the Statute of the Teaching Staff, Article 9, as well as the Specifications of the Ministry of National Education no. 30460/April 6, 1999, concerning the selection of the representative institutions.
According to the Decision of the Government of Romania no.690/1997 concerning the organization and functioning of the Ministry of National Education, with further modifications,

the Minister of National Education
decides:

Article 1. A number of 220 representative education institutions within pre-university education shall be established for 1998-1999 school year, in conformity with the Annex* which is integrant part of this Decision, including representative institutions organizing examinations for the occupation of vacant didactic positions.

Article 2. (1) The statute of representative education institution, granted on the basis of this Decision, shall be valid until August 31, 2000. (2) The selection of the representative education institutions may be yearly revised.

Article 3. The examination for the occupation of vacant didactic positions/chairs in the representative education institutions shall be organized and unfolded in conformity with the Methodology approved through the Decision of the Minister of National Education no. 3670/April 21, 1999.

Article 4. The State Secretariate for pre-university education, the General Directorate of Finances, the General Directorate for High Education and Scientific Research, the General Directorate for Pre-University Education, the General Directorate for Human Resources, the school inspectorates and representative institutions shall carry out the provisions in this Decision.

Article 5. Part II of the list of representative institutions of pre-university education not organizing the examination for the occupation of positions, shall be separately published.

MINISTER,
Andrei Marga

Secretary of State,
Mircea Corneliu Fronescu

Secretary General,
Horia Gavrila

Director General,
Marian Caraus

Director General,
Constantin Bratianu

Director General,
Liliana Preoteasa

Director General,
Madlen Serban

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U.S. Department of Education
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